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L O R D S A N D L A D I E S.

VOL. II.

LORDS AND LADIES.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF

“MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS,”

“THE VALLEY OF A HUNDRED FIRES,”

“THE QUEEN OF THE COUNTY,”

&c., &c.

“Musing on the little lives of men—
And how they mar this little by their feuds.”

TENNYSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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LORDS AND LADIES.

CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORY OF SCRUTTLES—RELATED BY
THE “EXCELLENT CONVICT” HIMSELF.

“I DON’T remember me ‘nothing about being born, please yer honour. I were a horphan, and I mostly lived hunder a pair of stairs wi’ Jem. Jem were my brother, leastway he said so, and I’ve heard tell as most on us is brothers if we only knowed it.

“Jem were older nor me, and in coorse he knowed the rights of the case better nor I could. But in the matter of larruping me,

cribbing my wittles, and a-cussing and a-swear-
ing at me, and a-knocking of me down, and
leaving me to pick myself hup, Jem was
surely an out-and-out brother to me. There
worn't no mistake about that, any how.

“I was amost eight years old, when Jem
says to me I were growed too big to live
with him, and considering as he couldn't stand
upright unless he wor a-sitting, and that I
could not lie down on my bed because of his
cheer, why, I do suppose as he had a bit of
reason. It wor an uncommon small place to be
sure. There wor the taty bag, right in under-
neath, and then there wor his bed, and then
the bit of old sack for his dorg, and arter
that a chist like, in which he kept his wictuel
and all his valuables; and then came I, and
hover me the cheer. And when me and the
cheer was there, why, then we was uncommon
safe, to be sure, 'cos why, you couldn't open
the door.

“‘Well, Jem,’ I says, ‘if so be as you says,’ I says, ‘that I must go,’ I says, ‘why, I do suppose,’ I says, ‘that go I must,’ I says.

“‘Ay,’ says Jem, ‘go ye must, and the sooner the better.’

“‘Well, Jem,’ says I, ‘go I will,’ says I, ‘but will you tell me,’ says I, ‘where I be to go,’ says I.

“‘Oh! bother,’ Jem says—says he, ‘what’s that to me, you take yerself hoff, or I’ll wollop you in a brace of shakes!’

“‘With that I went, gentlemen; because, you see, I had allers found Jem true to his word. With that I went, gentlemen——’

Here Scruttles paused, looking round with a hideous leer for compassion; taking a gulp of his gin-toddy to assist.

The Squire, staring at him in admiration of this new phase of ugliness, gave him his sympathy at once:

"Poor fellow!—and where did you go?"

"Well sir, yer honour; I were a dootiful lad, so I went back to my mother."

"Your mother! I thought you said you were an orphan?"

"She were my stép-mother, and an uncommon wick——"

"But who was your father?"

"My father, sir! I never had one—least-ways, I never heard of him."

"Then how could you have a step-mother?"

"I begs your parding, sir, humbly; she were my mother-in-law."

"Pooh! pooh! married at eight years old!"

"Don't bother him, Squire, he means foster-mother. I had a foster-mother, and I believe she is alive to this day, and a horrid old troublesome hag she is," interrupted King Crab.

"Well, Scruttles, whether it was your own mother in the form of a ghost, or your

stepmother, or your mother-in-law, or your foster-mother, go on, in the name of goodness!"

"I will, please your honour. About this time I were in a little trouble, and I mostly think as that there wor the reason why Jem thought I was growed, and so my—" he paused.

"Say mother at once—we shall understand."

"So my mother she were mad wi' Jem for sending me home like, and she said if I staid another minute in that there place, as she 'ood break every bone in my body—which in coorse, gentlemen, was not to be thought on by me; so I says, 'Mother,' says I, 'keep yerself to yerself,' I says, 'and you'll please yerself,' I says; and with that I went, gentlemen."

A long pause. Scruttles hoped to be encouraged by more sympathy, or was concocting fresh matter from the rich treasures of his imagination. His auditors were beginning to feel

that the story of the excellent convict was deficient in two things—interest and truth. But a good refresher of gin-toddy started him again.

“With that, gentlemen, I went; and I’ll not deny as I was uncommon low, and I were a-thinking as perhaps the best thing as I cud do, was to seek for my old Dad.”

“You said you had no father,” exclaimed the Squire impatiently.

“No, sir, he worn’t a father at all. We called him Dad, cos why, he tuk a lot of us boys in, and we worked for him. Dad were a man with a hawful temper, and when he wor angry, there worn’t no mistake about it, ye see. When Dad saw me, he hup with his toe and kicked me right into the gutter.

“‘You cum here, ye blessed jail-bird,’ says he; ‘cut yer lucky out of my sight,’ and a deal more. With that I went, gentlemen.”

“Yours is a very odd story, Scruttles. What

had you done, a child of eight years old, to make them all so cruel?"

"It wor the bit of trubble I were in, yer honour."

"But you never told us about your trouble. How could a boy like you have any trouble?"

"Well, you see, sir, this wor how it were. I were awalking one arternoon down St. Giles' way, and I seed a kercher alying on the pavement, adoing nuffin at all. So I picks him hup; and 'aving a cold in my hed, I wipes my nose on him, and jist as I did so a pleeceman lugs 'old of my 'air, and says, 'Cum wi me.' Now Jem had tould me horful things of those there places as pleecemen takes boys tew, and I were skeered. So I makes a dart between pleeceman's legs—he wor that orkard as he toppled over into the gutter, and I wor out of sight when he picked hissself hup. But he knowed me the next time as hever he sawed me—and they were so uncommon kind, those pleecemen, that I

mostly think as there were a score of 'em allus luiking out for me. So, gentlemen, with that I went."

"To jail?"

Scruttles nodded.

"And they talk of justice in England," exclaimed the Squire, bitterly. "A poor unfortunate eight years old boy to be sent to jail for picking up a handkerchief! Upon my soul, it's enough to put a man in a passion!"

"Justice probably had her spectacles on, and saw the other end of the handkerchief in a pocket," remarked Frank.

"No, sir, I axes yer parding; it were not an old lady in spectacles, it were—"

A pause.

"Go on, Scruttles," said King Crab; "get to something lively. Miss all your boy tricks, and begin again, when you were a man; he will have some famous adventures in the Bush, I dare say."

“Ay, sir, them wor days!”

“But I should like to know how you got there,” observed the Squire.

“Well, sir, yer honour, I went by sea.”

“Pooh—I mean why you went there.”

“Well, sir, yer honour, the devil a bit I know the reason. I had been in a bit of trubble.”

“Another trouble?”

“Oh! laws, yes, yer honour; I were allays in a bit of trubble. I was no sooner out of won, than, as ill-luck would ’ave it, I cotched another.”

“Always about handkerchiefs, Scruttles?”

“No, yer ’onour; I wor one of those poor critters born wi’ a ’art, yer ’onour. I wor in love, and my dispositions being ’onerubble, I says to Jude—Judith wor her reale name, but Jude was her love name like—I says to Jude, ‘Now, I means ’onerable by yer,’ I says, ‘Jude, and so we’ll be wed,

I says, 'but, as I harn't the 'onour of a quaintance,' I says, 'wi' a parson,' I says, 'why, Jude, yer must go yerself and settle it,' I says. Wi' that, gentlemen, Jude, she bust hout a larfing. 'Why,' says she, 'I don't no,' says she, 'noffin of a parson neither,' says she. So ye see, gentlemen, we wor in a fix, Jude and me. And I had got the wic-tuals for the weddin' feast, and me and my pals had a paction atween for a good lot o' licker.

"'Well,' says I, 'we'll be wed anyhow, Jude, for I mean ye 'onerable. Let's 'ave old Dad as parson,' I says. And she wor willin'. But old Dad, he said as he couldn't wed we without a ring, he says, gentleman, so Jude and me tuk on drefful. Then says old Dad, 'I 'ave a ring—giv me two bob, and I'll loan it yer.' Wi' that, gentlemen, bein' 'onerable I beat him down to one bob, and old Dad set to work to wed we; and the ring,

it wor a butiful ring, rale gould, wi' shinin' stones fixed in it, and I wor a-thinkin' arter we wor wed as Jude shouldn't give it back to old Dad, it wor so unkimmen genteel like. Well, we wor a-bein' wed, and the butiful ring it wor in my 'and, when I wor tuk so unkimmon bad wi' a stitch or cholera, that I had to bolt hout hinto the hair, gintlemen, and, has ill-luck wood 'ave it, I ran rite hinto the very body of a beak. 'Ho,' says he, 'hi 'ave been a-lookin for you, my brick, cum along wi' me.' Wi' that I went, gintlemen."

"How so? Did not you tell him you were just about to be married—though it would have been no marriage, Scruttles."

"So I do suppose, yer honor, but then my eddication 'ad never been hattended to, yer honor, and I nowed no better. My wishes wor to be 'onerable."

"And why did the beak want you?"

“Well, sir, it wor all along o’ my father.”

“Good heavens! why, you said you never had a father.”

“Laws, sir, we is bound to ’ave a father, wether he be a father or no. Mine worn’t by no manner of means a father to me, and never wor, and that’s why I were a horphan. He worn’t no credit to me as a father, and so I cut him. He guv me one day a ole ankercher of gran cloes, and it were as if Muster Poole, that were the tailor’s name on these here cloes, had a measured me. So in coorse I ’ad ’em on to be wed. And wood yer think it, gintlemen, my father ’ad a-stole those clothes. He were a wery active chap, and had follered a cab, and ’ad cut off a portmanty, and he ’ad the hunfeeling ’art as to giv me the cloes, and I were a-wearing thim, and the beaks they were arter him, and he ’ad the owdacious willainy to tell them there beaks as I tuk the

portmanty hoff the cab, and I were then a-wearing of the cloes, which I were, gentlemen, I'll not deny. And so he tells 'em where I be, and the hend of it were, that—with that I went, gentlemen."

"To prison?"

Scruttles nodded.

Then he groaned.

"Such a hunfeeling willain of a father!"

Then he took such a gulp of gin-toddy, all that remained of it disappeared.

But there was a long pause; either Scruttles waited for sympathy, or orders, or more gin-toddy.

The Squire is one of that sort of men who like "a spade to be called a spade." To create an interest in his mind everything must be so plainly put before him, so palpably straightforward and clear, so devoid of immediate, ulterior, or mysterious bearings, that it must be out of the power of any

one to doubt the least atom of the statement made.

And here was a story in act of narration—a story, the hearing of which he had been anticipating with extreme relish, that, at the very beginning, presented to him a medley of relationship that was in itself totally incomprehensible. Whether Scruttles was an orphan, or had a father and mother, mother-in-law, step-mother, foster-mother, a dad, a brother, a wife, or apology for a wife, could not, at this present shewing, be stated for fact.

But that he was in trouble, and always in trouble—which trouble, however mysteriously imposed upon Scruttles, seemed in every case to germinate from seed of his own sowing—there could be no doubt. The oft-recurring crisis of “with that I went, gentlemen,” pronounced with as much pathos as so gruff a voice could assume, and accompanied by as pleading a look as so frightful a countenance

could achieve, came at every crisis with happy effect.

Whether he always went to prison on these occasions, or merely obeyed humbly a stringent—painfully stringent order, to quit the presence of the speaker, is beginning to act quite as a nightmare on the Squire.

Utterly distasteful as this much-desired story now seems to him, he is morbidly anxious to follow up the course of those “with that I went, gentlemen.” He will forgive the whole conglomeration of relationship, merely to discover the crowning upshot of this test. He is anxious to give the man a fair hearing, though he begins to have qualms that he is compelling the uncouth creature to damn himself out of his own mouth. With regard to the virtue of truth in his story, the Squire perceives already that this indispensable ingredient has nothing to do with any part of it but “with that I went, gentlemen.”

And as for interest or pleasure in the hearing of such recitals, our good Squire's fine old heart revolts from the very detail thereof. But, like the sick man who has to take nauseous physic because of his own excess, the Squire gulps down his discomfiture, and at last says,

“And how long did you stay there?”

“Well, yer honour, it were a weary time. Folks were a-beginning then to bussy theysels about the prisons, and we was a'most tortured wi' parsons, and buiks, and sermons, and tracts, and folks as is called Filanderers.”

“Philanthropists,” suggested Spooner.

“Maybe, sir, but I didn't consort with anny of they folks. It were about bad enuf to be there, annyhow; and then to be impoged upon, and worrited, and never let alone—it wor as aggrawating as noffin. And I 'umbly 'opes as parliament will see us righted. We does our turn at the treadmill, and we picks our lot

of oakum, and we jams away at the stones, and we is stopped in our baccy, and I wud like for to know, yer honour, if a hiron steam-hingin of a 'orse could do more? It's that as I wants to know."

"But how long did you stay there?"

"Well, sir, yer honour, I were not nigh so long as Jem—my unkle—you know, yer honour, as turned me out from hunder the stairs——"

"You said he was your brother," said Summers, as the Squire cast a hopeless glance at him.

"Well, sir, it were never rightly known as to which he were, but in the matter of being the ondutifullest relation as ever were, Jem wud have ben ekally remarkable hether way. He were that sort on a chap were Jem, as niver tuk his own heyas hoff a-considerin' of his-self. As a brother, he were of no more manner o' use to me, yer honour, than a lady's pocky-handkercher, and as a nevey, he

were a deal sight worse, were Jem. And if ye'll b'leave me, gintlemen, he married Jude, her as I guv my heart to."

Here Scruttles attempted a whimper, and seeing him looking anxiously at his empty glass, Summers silently filled it again for him.

He took a good gulp, cleared his throat, and went on. It was apparent that Scruttles was warming to his work. Evidently he had hit upon a vein in his imagination of wonderful richness, or the gin-toddy emboldened him to stray off into unknown realms of fancy.

"Yes, sir, yer honour, Jem, he married Jude—my sweetheart. We was all there, in trouble, together."

"What ! Jude, and Dad, and Jem ?"

"Ay, sir, and father and mother, and my eldest sister Sal, and her babby—all along o' that theer fine goold ring. In coorse, when I had went where I went, this fine goolden

ring were in my hand, and in coorse they as tuk me where I went, says they, ‘And where didst thou crib that?’ So in coorse I tould ’em, and they sends, they do, and nabs ’em all, and I were a-most knocked down in my feelins when I sees ’em all a-walkin hin. And they was tuk uncommon strong, tew, in their feelins; and they says, says they to me, but I’m a-most afeard as sich language ain’t fit for sich pleasant company, and under favour, yer honour, I wunnot say a word on it. Blud is thicker nor warter, and they was all kin to me. So I jist harkaned to their nise, and then, gintlemen, with that——”

The Squire’s finger was ready to note down the familiar phrase. It doubled itself up again under the thumb as Scruttles continued.

“I sot down. And arter that Jem—my brother as were—he got fourteen year, and Jude, she got seven year—that were how it were as they got married—leastways so they

said they was—cos as 'ow they thought as they 'ood go together; but Jude, she went a-long-er in the same ship as me, and I says to Jude, I says, 'Make it hup, lass,' and Jude, her seemed pleasant, and her did say on her mug as her were willing."

"What do you mean, Scruttles?"

"Well, sir, folks as ain't a 'art in their bussums, they is the chaps as hinterferes with a feller's feelins. It were, yer honour, a horder in kouncil (a deal of trubble that there kouncil tuk to be considerable onpleasant), that there were to be no kummucations atwixt any of we as went; and so, as the mother of invention is a mighty kurous critter, we wos hused to scrat on the pewter mugs wot hideas came into our 'eds; and Jude, not 'aving larnt the hart of writing, her heddication 'aving been as little tuk notish of as yer humble servant, why, she got another gurl as culd do it to rite for her. Well,

we were about landing, and I were a-thinking as may-be I might get into the Bush along wi' Jude, when that there gurl as wrote on her mug, says to me, says she, 'Jude means to go along wi Dad;' and I were considerable riled, and, being so tender-'arted, all my blud were up, and it seemed to keep a-'ammering in my 'ed, and a-running just for all the world the wrong way, and that made me seem so as I culd see noffin. As I were a-walking on the deck, and Dad he were a-walking tew, and I never seed un, but, being tuk unkimmon bad wi' gripes or choleraye, I runs bolt up again Dad, and he topples over the side, and I'm a-most feared as poor Dad wuld have drowned, but, in coorse, as luck wuld 'ave it, he were chained to another man; and that there chap were a mighty strong fellow, and 'aving no mind to drown wi' Dad, why, he thought it most the best thing as he culd do were to pull hard and 'oller for his life. With that, gentlemen, I went."

“Down into the hold, I hope, heavily ironed, the best and fittest place for you.”

“I ’umbly axes yer parding, sir; I went into ’ospital. I were tuk wi’ the cholerae in my brain, I were so tender-’arted. I were in ’ospital until we landed, and arter that I were tuk up kuntry by a man as ’ad occashion for a strong yuseful chap as sheppard, yer honor. He axed me as wos I fond of mutton; and I says, says I, ‘Wery’; ‘and wi’ that, sir, I went up kuntry.

“Now, sir, if my master ’ad onny said to me, ‘Is I fond of sheep?’ why, then I culd ha known what to say. But when a man goes fur to call a beast by one name, when all the wile he means some’at quite contrary, why, I puts it to yer, gentlemen, if a bran-new set of brains culd ha made it yout?

“Me and my master were unkimmon full of each other as we was a-going hup kuntry; and if it wor the last words as I suld ever

'ave ocassion to say, I will make no denial of the truth, but he were wery 'andsome in his treatment. I were a-thinking has at last my trubble was hended, and my wartues was rewarded, and it were not so bad a kuntry, arter all. It wor a chokery kuntry for dust, and my master, he were quite conwinned o' that there fact; so, we were allais a-washen the dust down, which, axing yer parding, gentlemen, his the onny way I knows on in regard to dust. Dust it his, yer honour—"

"Never mind the dust—go on; you and your master did not continue 'such good friends, I conclude!"

"As fur the matter o' that, sir, yer honour, I bears he no malis; I were a heasy-going chap, and I says to him, I says, 'Don't yer holler at me, I 'ave 'ad the cholerae in my 'ed,' I says, 'and it a-most makes me mad,' I says. Because ye see, yer honour, he were a-'ollering at me, all day long, on akounts of these there sheep.

He said as he wanted a shepard, and no sich a brute (them was his indiividual words, sir) as a London jail-bud, who 'ad never set heyes on a sheep in all his born days, which were a hobservation, gentlemen, that in regard of the truth of it, was about the biggest lie as I ever heard tell on, as, in coorse, I 'ad seen 'em 'anging up in the butchers, shops by dozens. But he were a man of a low dispogition, he 'adn't no feelins, he 'adn't; and this were 'ow I knowed it, sir, yer honour. I were a-seeking one day for these here blessed sheep of hisn, which, for getting of theyselves into bushes, and kuntries, and mountains, where they hadn't no call to go, and for rampaging and skurrying, and straggling, and bolting just where they'd no occassion, air the most oudacious, aggrawaterynt, cantankerous set of heythens as mortal man were ever bothered with; and I were amost beside myself with heat and wexation, when I comes to a purty sort of a house like, and I,

taps at the door, just to ax for a drop of summat, being spent wi' toil and aggrawation. And the master of that purty place, he comes hout, and he takes hon hawful, along of theye oudacious cantankerous sheep, as 'ad been in 'is patch o' corn. And I axes 'is parding, and were civil and genteel like; and with that he gits the better of hisself, and he axes me hin; and then he turns on the Parliament dredful for sending hout into this fine kuntry such a hawful set of blackguards as knows nothing at all but murder, and thieving, and stealing, and lying; and he says—'My man,' says he, 'you look strong and active,' says he, 'why don't you,' says he, 'turn over a new leaf,' says he, 'and become honest?' says he.

“‘I ax yer pardon, sir,’ says I, ‘I ain’t myself, sir,’ says I, ‘I belong to the British Parliament, sir,’ says I.

“‘That won’t perwent yer being honest,’

says he, 'if you had been the man I want ye to be, ye would have been watchful, and not let my friend yure master's sheep get into my corn-land. He is a good neighbour of mine, and would cut his right hand off before he would injure a friend, or do 'er wrong, but cursed as we are by Government servants, it's pitiful work. Come, my man, do yer duty, and I'll stand a friend to you.'

"Now, I'll not deny, as there wor a some-thin' as guv me a dig in my ribs. He were a fine man were that; he were so heart-some.

"If you please, gentlemen, 'umbly axing your parding, I will drink his 'ealth. I think, gentlemen, if I culd see that there face of his agin, I think, yer honour, as it 'ood do me good; but yer see, gentlemen, it were not to be as we suld be friendly, and it came about all along of Sal, she that were my cousin——"

“You said sister!”

“If so be as I said sister, sister it may be, but sich is my rekollections of Sal that she were my cousin, and it isn’t much time as I ’ave ’ad to make out my relations properly. But Sal, being servant to this here good harty gentleman, why, in coorse, being neighbours, I tuk to courting Sal; and so I calkerlate in the long and short of it, as Sal could be no great relations, except in the matter of we being wed. But has for knowing whether Sal were my cousin, or my sister, or my grandmother, I ’ave been mostly in the ’abits of calling her my wife. Becase as luck ’ood ’ave it, this here master of hern, he were all for making fellers ’appy. He ’ad his feelins, he ’ad. Axing your parding, gentlemen, I’ll make so bold as drink his ’ealth. No man could desire a better master, and I amost think as I should never no more ’ave ’ad a bit of trouble if I bided with him.

For in coorse, when he found as Sal and me was wed——”

“How could you marry without leave of Government—both convicts?”

“That is ’ow it were, sir; when Sal brings me the bit victual and drink, as him did order, I screeched out at sight o’ she, and she ’ollered like hany thing; and I says, says I, upon his axing the reason, ‘She be my wife!’

“Sal were the girl as wrote that there on Jude’s mug, and I knowed Sal were fond of me; and with that she tumbles into my harms, and takes the hint pretty kind.

“‘Well,’ says her master, ‘I am not one to part man and wife, so I’ll speak up for ye at the Coort, and if your master will give ye up, I’ll take ye on wi’ me.’

“I axes yer parding, gentlemen, but if you please, I’ll drink his ’ealth.”

“By-the-bye, Scruttles, what was your Christian name?”

"I never hed none, yer honour."

"But what did people call you?"

"They just called me onny names they had a mind to; I made no dejections."

"What did Jude call you?"

"Hall the hawfullest names as ever you heerd on! I a'most thought on times as she wood break her teeth wi' hard names, and I am constant in my persuasious as she wore 'em out wi' talking. Oh! Jude had a tongue!"

"Who gave you the name of Scruttles?"

"I don't rightly know, sir, unless it were my noble capting there."

"Me, Scruttles? No such thing. I always supposed you had the same name as your mother—she, you know, who called on me to tell me you had got home, and wanted employment."

"Now, upon my word," interrupted the Squire, "if Scruttles has really a mother, I shall be glad to see her."

“Well, you may see her any day at Rampton; she lives just out of the town, and keeps a little shop. She is an old friend of mine, and so I thought to do her a good turn, and help her son to some employment. The old man goes out to weed.”

“Scruttles’ father!” some of them exclaimed.

“Of course! I conclude he is your father, Scruttles?”

“Well, my noble capting, I wudn’t like fur to say he were, of myself—leastways, I ’ood wish yer honour to back me hup——”

“Come, come, this is getting beyond the ridiculous. Go back to your new master—how long did you live with him?”

“Axing yer parding, sir, I never lived wi’ him a day, more’s the sorra. It were in this manner as it came about: I were a-waiting at my master’s for leave to go from his station to Sal’s master, and a-thinking of Sal, and all that there, and I wor a-sayin as I

must 'ave it out wi' Sal about that there babby as she 'ad left behind her in the ould country, and I thought to tell Sal, as my fatherly feelins was unkommon small, and I didn't have any hideas of bein' a dutiful parient, especial to an unbeknowed hinfant, and there came a messenger like mad a-sayin' as Sal's master's place were set on by the natyves, and he wanted 'elp. So my master, he harms 'isself and his men, and hi takes a 'atchet, and hoff we goes to help, and hi were in a mortal way about Sal, a-thinking as sun black hederous critter of an Indyman would ha' tuk her hoff fur her beauty—for she were a butiful critter, wi' hair as bright and as red as a live coal, and such a strapper, whereas Jude——”

“Go on—get to Sal's master.”

“Well, sir, it worn't no manner o' use getting there. The purty house wor burnt, and there were no signs of onny one. Wi'

that my master were tuk hawful bad, and he says, says he to his men, ‘’Tis no nattyves, ’tis bushrangers. A free pardon to all who follow me and rescue them!’ Laws, sirs, ye might ha’ knocked me down wi’ a feather. A free parding! hooray! says I to myself—a free parding I’ll get, no matter how! And, gentlemen, with that I went.”

“Not to jail, Scruttles?”

“No, yer honour, but I knowed war they were, and I tuk my master straight there, and we reskied ’em, and got ’em safe back; and that is ’ow, axing your parding, sir, as I cummed home.”

“That is, you knew the hiding-place of the bushrangers, and you betrayed them?”

“Axing yer honour’s parding, I did not belay ’em. We shot ’em. As for Jem, I guv ’im a taste of my ’atchet, and old Dad, he were shot, but it were not me as put a hend to his career, because in coorse I couldn’t,

not 'aving a musket or pistol for to shoot with, and being my step-grandfather-in-law."

"What?"

"My foster-grandfather, I axes yer parding. I wuldn't a-done it on no akounts; but Jude she up wi' a hax, and she had the hunfeelin 'art as to hit me over the nose the hawfulest blow, as I fell a-weltering hin my blood. And when they was hall manakled and murdered, Sal's master picks hup my nose, and claps him hon agin; and that is how it were, gentlemen, that this here nose of mine ain't all here. For the matter of that, I never rightly knowed whether it were mine or Jem's—but onny how, Jem being dead."

"I am glad he is dead," murmured the Squire.

"Jem being dead, he hadn't no call for a nose anny more; but I am thinking it were Jem's nose, for it were such a hawful hugly

wun. But Sal's master he did it hall for the best."

"What was his name?"

"Axing your parding, sir, I never made so bold as to make the hinqiry. He were a gentleman; and if Parliament wonts a man for a husband to one of the royal princesses, he oughter be that man, for he were all day long a-thinking of heverybuddy, and never tuk 'is heyes off his wife and babby."

"Was she taken too by the bushrangers?"

"Ay, yer honour, if you please."

I suppose Scruttles was again about to drink the health of his friend, but, as his glass was now empty, he could do no more than peer significantly into it. No one taking the hint, he proceeded:

"If you please, yer honour, he were a fine man, and she were a butiful critter, and the babby were a butiful babby, and there were a deal of crying and blubberings all

along of joy, yer honour, that they had rekivered theysels from they murderous bush-ers; for Jem he were a desperate feller, and he said as 'ow he'd 'ave thousands of pounds for theyre ransom. But, in coorse, Jem could not kep his wurd to hisselt in the matter—cos why, he were dead, and we reskied them. And there were a deal of joy far and near, for this here fine-'arted gentleman were thowt greatly on, and so was his butiful lady, and the butiful babby."

"Well, go on; I suppose you were well rewarded?"

"That I were, yer honer. I were a hyro, like the Dook of Wellington, and becos as that guv a deal of henvyng and mallis, and sich hawful sins to all they folks as his hunder the pertection of Parliament, why, it were thought as I had best go back to the old kuntry. Sal's master, he sed as he had promised me a free parding, but the Parlia-

ment were so unkimmon koind has to say they 'ood still be my pertecter, but, in consekenz of all this henvy and mallis, they sed as 'ow my percious life warn't safe. Jude, 'ung hall hover wi' chains, swore she 'ud 'ave my life, if she swung for it. With that I went, gentlemen."

"Home to England, with a free pardon?"

"Axing yer parding, they wos too fond of me to let me free hoff. I were guv a ticket."

Here they all exchanged glances, indicative of very mixed feelings. King Crabshawe was evidently much discomposed, George was horrified, Spooner's hair began visibly to rise, the Squire alone, pleased to find his earliest opinion of Scruttles so remarkably verified, smiled complacently.

"And did your Sal come with you?"

"Sal were a remarkable gurl, she were hall hover tender-'artedness. She were that tender-

'arted as she were quite foolish, and she culd not leave that butiful babby. She were its nuss, and when it were reskied and got home, Sal took the strikes shocking bad. She 'ollered and shrieked like anything. So, finding her dispoziitions contrariwise to me, her true lovyer, fur she said as hur 'ood see me dom—I mean, yer honour, as hur would on no akounts fulfil her hengagement to me, being 'onerable hunder hall cirkumstances—why, gentlemen, with that I went."

"And left Sal behind?"

"In the matter of that there fact, hit his not hin the natur of my disposition to pertend has she cummed away wi' me. 'No,' says she to me, 'I'll drown myself afore I 'ood ever tetch heven a finger of such a carchish as yourn.' Which were a thing of Sal, gentlemen, has I didn't hexpect on no akounts; and I do suppose has hit came about all along of that there hystrikes as guv her the cho-

leray in her brain. But her master, that fine-
'arted man, and her mistress, that theyre buti-
ful critter, and the butiful babby, they was fond
of Sal, theye were, and they sed on akounts
of hur being the won as bamboozled me
hinto showing that there secret place, they
'ood be father and mother to she. And I
reckon as Sal is made for life. To be shure,
'ow her did tongue-rag me! She 'ad the ow-
daciousness to tell me as I 'ad a soul as 'ud
be lost. Then I says to Sal, says I, 'a soul
hindeed!' says I, 'and where be that soul?' I
says, 'show hit me,' I says, 'and hi'll thank
ye,' I says. You see, gentlemen, Sal 'ad got
among the methody, and she were a-praying
and a-crying hall day hover her sins, were
Sal; and so, gentlemen, that were 'ow it came
about as me and Sal did not get wed."

"And how came Sal's master not to be
able to get you a free pardon, after his pro-
mise?"

“Well, sir, that there cirkumstance is mighty kurous, and I make bould to think, yer honour, as Parliament hinterfered. Leastways, when I cummed home, I kep myself to myself, and came down to these yer parts. Sal’s master, he guv me a bit of munney fur to send oure babby out to Sal, fur he were an unkummon fine-’arted chap, were Sal’s master; but they’re a kurous set o’ folks, them folks as settle parish matters, and I were afeerd, gentlemen, has they ’ood nab me for the keep o’ that there babby, and so I hanna been a-nigh the place. And that makes me low, axing yer parding, gentlemen, fur I thinks o’ Sal a-crying for that there babby, which, in the matter of being a babby, his, I do suppose, summat nigh on to ten years hold. So with that, gentlemen, I didn’t went.”

“Then all I have got to say is, that that is about the only place you ought to have gone to. Let me know where this child is, and I will

take care and see that it is sent out to its poor mother."

"I thank ye from my 'art, yer honour, and I 'ood obleege ye down to the wery ground, but I don't rightly know noffin about this here child—leastwise, goin' on nigh upon two year; for Sal's master, he wrote to these here parish folk his-self, which were a straightforward 'onerable coorse to take, and they hanswered him right off, ekally straightforward hand 'onerable, and they sent that there child of ourn hout to Sal, now this three year cum Michaelmas."

"Now take yerself off—I have heard enough of your story at present."

"I 'umbly axes yer honour's parding—I 'ave a deal more in my 'ed, unkommon curious and——"

But Scruttles was summarily expelled, and the whist table was prepared.

The Squire is, however, in no mood for whist. It is positive pain to the dear old

fellow to be brought face to face with such a specimen of low vice and utter worthlessness as Scruttles.

King Crab, not having so delicate a sense of the moral laws of our being, begins to make excuses for his "excellent convict."

"Poor beast !" he says, "what he must have gone through ! He seems to have been an idiot, or a fool, or something of that sort, to be drawn into all these scrapes."

"There did not seem much drawing—I think evil was inherent in his nature," observes Spooner.

"I can't think that—his grandfather and grandmother——"

"For God's sake, don't give him any more relations !" growled the Squire.

"I mean those respectable old people who keep the shop—those that I mentioned to you living in our lane."

"You said they were his father and mother."

“I don’t think they are—she might be his sister——”

“Don’t, Crabshawe. Why, you are as bad as the convict himself!”

“What do you mean, sir?” exclaimed the Captain, rising like Mount Etna, flaming with wrath, and smoking vehemently.

“Nothing! he means nothing!” Summers pleaded. “Come, sit down to your whist. Don’t you see the Squire is bothered?”

“He has no right to say I am like a convict.”

“He did not say so; he merely meant that in the matter of knowing how many relations Scruttles had, or whether he had none at all, or if one stood in the place of all, or all acted the part of each, as occasion required, you seemed quite as much in the dark as himself.”

“And so I ought to be. Why am I supposed to know or care a fig for the fellow’s relations?”

“You volunteered the information——”

“It is beyond my comprehension,” soliloquised the Squire, utterly regardless of what was said, “how he came to be what he was.”

“Hah!” says Spooner, smitten with the metaphysical aspect of the Squire’s remark. “I am precisely of your opinion, Squire. The man is a remarkable specimen of the power of matter over mind.”

“I don’t think the fellow has a mind. Suppose him capable of thinking, his thoughts ought to have driven him mad. Does anyone know if anybody ever was born without a soul—I mean without a conscience, you know?”

The Squire’s important question remained unanswered. None of them were sufficiently up in psychological studies to be able to state for a fact that they knew of such a case.

Scruttles was the only specimen with a bias that way, and, he, being the wherefore,

of course could not be the example also

“I observed that you were taking notes, Frank, of all he said. Read it over, please.”

He complied, and had no sooner finished, than one and all burst out laughing. Even the Squire roared.

“Why, the thing is too ludicrous. Don’t you perceive he never mentions a name?”

“That shows he has a mind, at all events ; for he reasons that his antecedents do not permit of close investigation. He does not intend that any of us shall be able at any time to bring him to book for what he has this night related to us.”

“Probably he heard your pen going, Frank, though he did not see you. I feel sure he has mystified everything purposely !”

“But still,” said the Squire gloomily, “what an awful history it is, supposing even that the most of it is false. The man’s nature is thoroughly demoralised.”

"He was born, Squire, I should say, with the intellectual bumps wholly deficient, the moral development extremely imperfect, so that——" remarked Spooner.

"I don't believe in bumps."

"Perhaps not, my dear sir; then take his physiognomy. According to Lavater, a man should be possessed of breadth between the eyes."

"Which Scruttles has not. No baboon, no ape, no gorilla, ever had a pair of eyes more nearly placed together."

"Scientifically speaking——"

"Why scientifically? Why not take the man as we have found him—a low, base, cringing nature."

"Come and play whist, my dear Squire, and don't bother your brains more about the man."

The Squire obeyed, but anon he revoked. Instead of apologising to his partner, the

Squire solemnly looked across the table and addressed him thus :

“Suppose, sir, that you or I had been born in the same station of life as Scruttles.”

“I don’t suppose it at all; pray go on, sir, we have lost the game.”

The Squire revoked a second time, and a second time he leant across the table and said,

“Suppose, now, that we had done the things that Scruttles has done.”

“I cannot suppose it, sir, ’tis impossible; I am not capable of such baseness. We have again lost the game.”

For the third time the Squire revoked, his partner threw down his cards, and attempted to rise.

“Don’t go,” said the Squire, “I want to ask you a question. What have we done that the Almighty has been so merciful as not to make us like Scruttles?”

"I cannot answer your question, Squire—as we none of us can, I fear; but I will do my best, while on the island, to give Scruttles some notion of the difference between good and evil," answered Frank, the only one who seemed capable of replying to such a remark.

"Do, Frank, and I will help you. Much as I loathe the fellow, I long for him to taste, for once in his life, that feeling which God has often vouchsafed me, the glow of doing a good action. I think it might open the man's faculties."

"He has some sense of it, for his involuntary admiration of Sal's master proves he felt the difference between good and bad."

CHAPTER II.

“LUFF IT IS.”

Extracts from the Ladies' Journal.

BY CLARA.

“YESTERDAY, a boat came from Exe (by order) to take us to church. They seem a primitive set of people, for the boat was here by nine o'clock, and as there could be no infringement of the famous agreement, of course we could not suffer the sailors to land. We, therefore, made a virtue of necessity, which, after all, was an agreeable necessity, giving us so many more hours of freedom (yes, I will so call it), and set off for Exe about twenty minutes past nine o'clock. We

left our palace in perfect order, but wholly unguarded, except by Runa and Mignon. Of course Susan came with us—arrayed in her bonnet of gorgeous bows.

“How is it that old-fashioned servants, appearing as perfect pictures of their kind in their working dress, yet have no sort of taste as to their Sunday garments?

“In the first place, Susan must have spent the time she usually occupies in scouring her pans, on this particular Sunday, in polishing her face. It shone like her own particular little copper kettle. Surrounding this shining visage was a large shady bonnet; on the left hand rim of which, perched like a tottering bird, was a misshapen bow of ribbon—scarlet in colour. Diagonally placed across the bonnet from this bow was another, and from the second, also in a diagonal line, was a third. The position of this bow was as critical as that on the rim of the bonnet. It was

perched at the edge of the crown. A broad piece of ribbon was so arranged, that it had nothing to do with any of the bows, but seemed placed where it was as if to hide a rent. In fact, it had all the appearance of a patch, though it was solely arranged thus for ornament.

“Susan’s bonnet was very much too large for her, and consequently she had to give little jerks every now and then to keep it in its place. We were in fear for those two tottering bows every time she did so.

“Her shawl was meant to have a white ground, but it was so barred across in every direction with bright colours, in which twice as much yellow was used as any other, that at a distance it presented one gorgeous spectacle of the brightest hues. It was securely fastened across the chest by a large cooking pin.

“Her dress she was pleased to term a lustre. It was shiny, stiff, uncompromising,

and the colour a dingy attempt at purple shot with yellow. White cotton gloves, and her prayer-book folded in her pocket-handkerchief, completed her attire—all but a huge cotton umbrella, to the handle of which was tied a pair of pattens.

“The two sailors, no doubt struck by so much finery, were very attentive to Susan; she receiving their civilities with great dignity. She so far paid her due, as she called it, to the Sabbath, by always putting on her company manners with her best clothes. On week days she has but scant courtesy for the male sex.

“‘Them men folks,’ she observed to my gossip and me one day, ‘aggerwates me, young ladies. They amost think as the warld were made a purpis for them; and if it were, the Almighty sune find out as they couldn’t do nothing for theysels, they were bound to have a woman to do for them.’

“‘Were you ever married, Susan?’ asked my gossip.

“‘Hoot! miss; do you think I wad make myself a maid-of-all-wark for the likes of them. The mistress, now, it’s a pleasure to do for, for if ever a lady knowed the differ between a good servant and a slattern, she be it. Oh! she is knowledgeable!’

“‘Then, Susan, had you ever a lover?’

“‘Be done! miss; a lover indeed! a likely thing in my kitchen! Let me catch him a-coming here, and I’ll give him my notions of sauce.’

“And Susan, snatching up nothing at all that we could see, dashed out of the kitchen, very red in the face.

“‘She must have had a lover, gossip,’ said I, ‘and been jilted.’

“‘You know more about such things than I,’ answered this impertinent little gossip of mine, ‘so I will take your word for it.’

“‘We will ask Mrs. Joscelyn.’

“‘She is too loyal to tell.’

“‘But if it is to Susan’s credit?’

“‘Ah! that is a different affair.’

“But now we must go to church. We were in the boat, as I said, twenty minutes past nine. So short is the distance between us and Exe, that as we walked up the steep path to church, the clock in its primitive steeple was striking ten.

“‘A whole hour to wait! What shall we do with ourselves?’ This is what we said to each other.

“On reaching the churchyard, we were astonished not only at its size, but at the number and peculiarity of its tombstones. By degrees, as we went reading the names on them, we were struck with painful astonishment at the almost universal record on each. Nearly all who lay there had been drowned.

“Involuntarily we turned our eyes on the beau-

tiful calm 'monster' that lay placidly basking under the brilliant rays of a June sun.

"On her bosom she was bearing with a dignified pride not only our island and the other islands, but the powerful two-funnelled Trinity yacht, the fishing smacks, and even the little tiny boat that brought us to church. As we looked down now on to the beach, it lay like a stray leaf on the water.

"Oh! sea—so grand in quiet beauty, so lovely in majestic repose, so loveable in gentle power—why art thou so remorseless? Why rage and swell? Why drown the people who have confided in your goodness and strength? What ails thee, oh! thou sea, that thou drivest to and fro?—that thou lashest thy sister's shore?—that thou destroyest the children she has trusted to thy care?—that thou fillest the churchyards round thy boundaries with the bodies of those thou hast drowned? An answer comes surging up from thy deepest

caverns—‘Look into the heart of man. What seest thou there? Evil and passion continually.’

“If the creatures with living souls rage and terrify their fellow-mortals with the violence of their stormy moods, wherefore ask of that which hath no reason, which knoweth not good from bad, which obeyeth the laws of nature, which listens to the whispers of the wind, and rises and falls as the west or the south wind blows, which hath never altered since God made it, beheld it, and said, ‘It is good’? Wherefore ask of it the reason that men are drowned, and the churchyards filled with the bodies cast up from the caverns of the deep? It is true. It were more reasonable to ask the drowned wherefore they carried on their business on great waters.

“Nevertheless, we walked among the grave-stones with sad and chastened hearts. There was so much of pitiful, loving human woe

expressed in the records. Mrs. Spooner shed tears over a tomb that painted as touchingly as stone and graven words could, the distracting grief of a young husband who had borne his wife on one arm, while he battled among the waves with the other, only to find, when both gained the shore at last, that she was dead, past all recovery.

“My dear little gossip mourned over a tombstone thus inscribed :—

‘ SACRED TO THE MEMORY

OF

HUGH SCUDAMORE,

Aged thirteen years,

Midshipman on board H.M.S. “Chanticleer,”

Drowned the 25th November, 1824.

“He was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.”

“As for me, I contemplated, with feelings that had much of pride and admiration mingled with my sorrow, a large monument, the work of one of our most distinguished sculptors. Underneath a stone canopy that was upheld

by round pillars of polished granite, lay, as if on a wreck-strewn shore, the marble figure of a young girl. In the soft pliancy of the form, in the helpless, hapless attitude, you saw at once before you the representation of a drowned figure. The youthful round face was upturned, as if she had appealed to heaven with her last breath, and the immobility of death had immortalised the look. There was no despair in the face, no pain, no agony—there was simply devotion. Her long hair fell like a pall all over her; one hand clasped a book to her breast, the other was placed down on her dress, grasping it in folds, as if to keep it in its place. One little foot was encased in a stocking, the other seemed like a thing of life—so fair, so round, so perfect, with a bit of sea-weed wound over the instep.

“Before I read the inscription on her tomb, I knew she was one immortalised on earth as well as in heaven :

‘ SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF
F R A N C E S C A L D E R,
Who was drowned on the night of the 15th of Oct., 18—
A night memorable all over England
for
A tempest of unusual and appalling violence.
This Monument
Is raised to her memory
By the survivors of the Troop-Ship “ Adrian Capel,”
Who owe their lives to her pious fortitude
And heroic patience.’

“The ship being driven by the furiousness of the wind on to the reef of rocks known by the name of ‘Wolves Reef,’ the captain announced that all hope of saving her was over, and urged the people to commend themselves to the mercy of God, as their lives were now in His hands only. Disregarding his advice, with frightful yells, the crew, the troops, and many of the passengers rushed to the spirit room. They were met on their way, clothed all in white, in such garments as she could

snatch, by Miss Calder. She stood before the door, and warned them back. Her look was so lofty and inspired, her youth and beauty so great, her courage so high, that all to a man obeyed her.

“With clear ringing voice she told the captain that she knew the coast well, and, if any strong man would venture with a rope round his waist to cross a surging sea between them and the next rock, he could so arrange a rope, that all might, with common courage, reach it also, from whence to the shore there was a safe causeway along the reef of rocks. A sailor, corroborating her words, volunteered to take the rope. He succeeded in crossing, and so fastened the rope, that five or six people passed safely in as many minutes. Two more ropes were now got in order, and the women and children were all safely landed.

“During this time, lashed by her own request

to the mast, this beautiful and inspired girl read out the prayers for those in danger. In the midst of the fury of the tempest, the war of the sea, the rending and crashing of the vessel, her clear voice was heard like a warning from heaven; it never wavered or stopped, until now, the women and children safe, she was urged to go next.

“‘No,’ she answered, ‘let the fathers and sons go!’ And they crossed, comforted and encouraged by the holy words that fell from her lips. It seemed as if the elements submitted in some degree to the power of her words. There remained but eight people on deck, when the captain cut the lashings that bound her to the mast, and prepared to take her over himself.

“It seemed as if the lull in the storm ceased with the sound of her voice and the spell of the beautiful prayers; for just as she was stepping from the shelter by the mast, to trust

herself, tied to the rope, into the boiling surge, a terrific blast swept over every crested wave, carrying sheets of water in its course, and fastening upon the vessel, sent it heaving over, breaking all the ropes, and drowning, by the violence of its power, every soul left, but one. That one, Adam Wright by name, said he heard the sweet soul, in the midst of the boiling surge, commending herself to God.

“She was found the next morning in the position in which she has been sculptured.

“A saint on earth, God took her to be a saint in heaven, in the seventeenth year of her age.

“One hundred and forty people were saved, seven drowned. I have written this from memory.

“It is shorter, and more touching, graven round her tombstone.

“How small to me appeared the trivial vexations of every-day life compared with the

hour of mortal fear and agony endured by this fair young child of seventeen !

“I was deeply thinking on her fate, when little Bessie touched me, and said, ‘Look!’

“The bells were ringing—all too soon, we each thought—and it seemed as if the sound of them had awakened life in the great two-funnelled Trinity ship.

“We joined an old sailor who was looking at her through the telescope.

“‘They tell me, madums,’ said he, ‘as there be a fammous hadmiral aboard, and I were a-looking to see if he were a-coming to sarvis. Mostly, madums, when a man be fammous, he be a rightous sort on a man. If he be him as I heered tell on, it’s bound we be to give un a cheer.’

“When we heard his name we agreed with the old sailor that he ought to be cheered. Our hearts quite beat with the anticipation of seeing so noted an admiral.

“‘There for sartain be a barge coming, but there’s nobbit two plain folks in it, and one be steering. A hadmiral have a power of gould on him, and a cocked hat, and a gran’ sword, haven’t he, mum?’ asked the old sailor of Mrs. Joscelyn.

“‘I think he has when on duty, but I do not know if he would come to church in his uniform.’

“‘There be a cutter, and a launch, and a jolly-boat, all as full as full cun be. And there be hossifers, and leftenants, and middies in heach. But nowhere does I see my Lord Igh Hadmiral.’

“‘Oh! do see him, Mr. Sailor,’ says little gossip, ‘I do so long to see a hero!’

“‘He has a Victoria Cross, I believe,’ said Mrs. Joscelyn.

“‘Has he, indeed? Goodness gracious me! How I long to see him!’

“‘I think we had better go into the church

and take our places, for the sailors are landing,' said Mrs. Joscelyn.

"Much to my gossip's disappointment, in we went.

"Her mind was too much occupied to notice the singularity of the church. It had a low roof, which outspanned into two broad aisles, not alike in length or width. These were supported by stone pillars of the most primitive workmanship, arranged without order, and seemingly placed more from some fancied weakness in the roof than from architectural rules. The effect was, nevertheless, beautiful, for each pillar had its groined ribs, and, in every part of the church, the grouping of these rough huge pillars and their powerful arches had a wonderful effect. One could imagine the church had been built by the united aid of its own congregation, who, lacking skill, had brought strength and will to the work, and poured forth the powers of both towards

building a house of God that should last for ages.

“I can imagine the pyramids of Egypt scarcely less imperishable than the rude grandeur of this ancient church.

“The pews were by no means uniform. It appeared as if each member of the congregation had constructed his own seat after his own liking. This irregularity added to, rather than took away from, the solemnity of the building. It looked indeed a house of prayer—so simply holy, so purely sacred.

“We were shown into a long wide pew, which, with a forethought that might well be copied in other churches, was rudely emblazoned with the words,

‘The Strangers’ Pew.’

It had some pretence at ornament. Here and there a piece of primeval carving peeped out, and the door had an ancient and ornamented hasp. There were one or two small

cushions placed at intervals on the seats, and a few ponderous, straw-covered hassocks stood out pretentiously for use. It was certainly the best pew in the church. All the others were filling fast. Old weather-beaten men, accompanied, or leading by the hand little rosy-cheeked, smiling children. Elderly grave women, invariably dressed in dark blue cloaks, black velvet bonnets, and their faces surrounded by snowy caps. Pretty girls came tripping in, making a sort of bob-curtsey as they passed the 'strangers' pew,' followed by slouching, heavy-footed youths, who stroked down their hair, and trudged up the church aisles, as if the more noise they made the better.

"And now we were conscious of the tramp of many feet.

"My dear little gossip, not even looking up, flushed crimson to her very temples.

"It was a beautiful sight to see the fine tars trooping in, such a grand body of

men, doffing their hats as they crossed the threshold, and treading so lightly within the church, they altogether made less noise than one of the clumsy youths alone. By-and-bye the church seemed full of blue jackets. Every pew had an open door for them, and in a while our door was unhasped by the clerk, and two officers in naval uniform shared the 'strangers' pew' with us.

"I knew enough to be aware that neither of these could be that famous admiral. But my gossip was looking through her eyelashes all over wonder.

"Suddenly, noiselessly, two gentlemen entered the church door and proceeded up the aisle. Plainly dressed, unpretentious, with grave looks, with a notable reverence they passed through the people. Even as they entered, our naval officers had risen from their seats, and already opened the door; and they seemed to bow their heads in a sort of respect as these two

simple, quiet, unassuming gentlemen entered.

“Could either of these be the expected Admiral? One was too young. And the other? A small man, wearing spectacles, an oval face, sunburnt, no—weather-beaten by the storms of forty winters and more; for above, by the roots of his hair, his skin shone as white as a girl’s.

“How full of devotion is his manner! How reverently and earnestly he pronounces the responses! His little old prayer-book is almost as weather-beaten as himself; and each time that he has to listen and not use it, each time it goes into his pocket.

“Perhaps that little prayer-book always lives there? Perhaps he and it are such old friends they are never parted? Perhaps they have been in peril together? He looks as if he was glad to thank God. He is happy in spirit; he has no care, he is without trouble, his face is expressive of perfect serenity, heart and mind;

all this is doubly expressed in his countenance as he thanks God.

“There does not seem to be anything famous about him; yet somehow I feel sure he is that famous Admiral. His companion is a very fine fellow. Though only dressed in a suit of plain grey tweed, he is a king to those two smartly dressed naval officers.

“He has large, gracious, and benign eyes. They glance about gently and calmly. They have rested for a moment on my poor little gossip, who, though never looking up, is conscious of the gaze, and blushes more violently than ever. Compassionately he withholds the lordly glance, and she pales as quickly as she flushed.

“I catch a look; he half smiles, as I encounter it unflinching. In truth, I wonder at the beauty of his eyes, their clearness, their benignity, their truth. I think to myself—‘So looked Frances Calder, when alive.’

“But hold! am I not ashamed to think so much of these strangers, so little of my prayers? We are about to sing a hymn. The clerk has presented ‘the strangers’ pew,’ not often so full, with some more hymn-books. He who I think is the great Admiral hands one to Mrs. Joscelyn, saying almost aloud,

“‘I don’t sing—I listen,’ and refuses to use a book.

“He who I think is a hero, or will be one, for he is still young, turns to my little gossip, and seems to command her, by some mysterious unspoken power, to sing out of the same book as he does. And all the time he sings, he looks down upon the words, down upon the tiny little thumb opposite to his own, down upon those wonderful eyelashes of hers, as if expecting them to rise and show the eyes beneath. But they never rise. They shade invariably a cheek that becomes red and pale with astonishing rapidity. In the middle of the

hymn, it strikes me, still irreverent, that I have never even looked into the faces of the two officers; I don't seem to care to look at them.

“Now I will attend to my prayers.

“I do so with some little trouble. I catch myself listening to him whom I think to be the famous Admiral, saying his prayers. He repeats them with all his heart. He shuts his little weather-beaten prayer-book, gives it a squeeze, says—‘We beseech Thee to hear us, Good Lord,’ out of his very soul; opens it again, and goes on properly. That prayer, ‘We beseech Thee to hear us, Good Lord,’ was for the Queen. Again the little prayer-book is shut, again has a little squeeze; again I hear the words out of the very depths of his soul. This time it is for those in peril, in danger, and tribulation. When we come to the thanksgiving, the little prayer-book goes to its home in his pocket; he wants both his hands to clasp together, as we do when we are little

children. This (for I know he is) famous Admiral clasps his hands together, and repeats the thanksgiving prayer with the pure faith and fervour of an innocent child. Thus I think he hath been 'in peril oft,' and God hath delivered him.

"Now we have another hymn, and he with the great calm eyes has again ordered my gossip, without word or sign, to sing out of the same book with him. And she is nervously anxious to obey. They are both ready long before any one else!

"And now he that must be the Admiral, for the first time looks round.

"He looks at my gossip—he takes off his spectacles, wipes them, puts them on again, and looks once more. Then he looks up at his friend, who is a good deal the tallest. A sort of pleasant flicker of a smile comes on to his face as he perceives that his friend is intently gazing at my gossip, who, somewhat more calm and used to her peculiar situation, is singing

most piously and heartily. Indeed, so much so, that she has for a moment forgotten the great lordly creature holding half her hymn-book, and looks up.

“Their eyes meet for the first time. Those large, unwavering, gracious eyes look down into a pair of orbs that have the startled but trustful look of the fawn’s. He sees them only for a moment, as the eyelashes are required once more to shade the blushing cheek.

“Somehow my gossip stops singing; she lets her neighbour hold the book by himself—she fusses in her pocket for her handkerchief. She thinks the hymn is finished, and sits down, but she has to rise again, abashed and trembling. These old sailors like to hear their cracked droning voices, and they quaver through every verse, in evident delight at their own performance, always giving the last verse twice over, that we may be certain not to be defrauded of our due share of ‘praise.’

“The coming of the sermon surprises me—I have been so inattentive. Nothing and no one shall disturb me more. I will remember I am at church. I will not care for famous Admirals, for their handsome friends, for my little gossip’s girlish prettinesses.

“So, in two minutes, I see the Admiral again looking at her; he and his friend exchange a glance which tells me as plain as words they are both admiring her. She looks very pretty—her fresh rosy lips just a little opened, she is listening so attentively to the sermon, and the long eyelashes are again shading the cheek. She is quite a little rose-bud of a girl, and the sun seems to think he will look at her also, for he has sent a ray of light just across her sunny hair and brow. Now I will listen to the sermon. So I do for five minutes. Then I am astonished—perhaps a little shocked—to see he whom I think the famous Admiral nodding. Certainly his eyes are closed—he is dozing.

“Taking advantage of this state of things, the young lieutenant, in his fine uniform, draws himself up, looks manly, and gazes upon the sleeping Admiral with bold and indulgent eyes. The sleeping Admiral nods a little too much, and wakes up with the effort—the lieutenant sinks back into his corner, and shrinks into as small a space as he can.

“But I will attend to the sermon.

“It begins to occur to me that the sermon is a bad one—not worth listening to. Moreover, the delivery of it is unpleasant—all the s’s are pronounced as z’s—the preacher is saying now, speaking of another than himself, ‘The manner is not to be regarded if the matter be good.’

“‘I agree not with you, oh! preacher; there is that in thy manner which offendeth me, and there is nothing in the matter that interesteth me. Let me be excused attending to thee, and let me read a lesson in the human heart,

that seems opening to my vision. I would analyse the nature of which God makes our heroes. I would define the springs from which noble thoughts come; I would trace to their source the emanations of high-mindedness, of self-abnegation, of——”

“ ‘Now, to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost.’

“Shame! shame to me! Even the end of the sermon has surprised me. What vows have I paid the Lord in His house? What offerings of the heart have I laid on His altar? From beginning to end ‘I have done that which I ought not to have done, and left undone what I ought to have done.’

“Let me go to the monument of the devoted and heroic Frances Calder, and take a lesson from the beautiful upturned face—from the wave-washed form, graceful and lovely even in the stony grasp of death.”

The beautiful characters of this writing

ceased here, and an impulsive sort of school-girl's pen takes its place. Many of the words are scored under, but latterly the writing becomes more firm, the mind is evidently much too full to remember the scoring.

“Last night how we grumbled at that great cannibal of a steamer coming and making so great a commotion. Mrs. Spooner thought it would bump against our island and knock it over. Fortunately, as Clara explained to her, under the sea our islands are all one, the mountainous parts rising up and making islands of themselves. Captain Crabshawe, it is to be hoped, will not hear this. It would grieve him to think he was still on the same continent as a petticoat, though the sea is so good as to separate us.

“When the sailors came at nine o'clock to take us to Exe church, they told us that this ‘cannibal,’ as I called it, was one of the powerful screw vessels that go about the

coast of England, visiting the lighthouses and taking them stores.

“It had come into the bay to see after the lighthouse at Ribble, which was in need of repair, and would probably stay two or three days. So we must look upon her as a friend, not a cannibal.

“For my part, now that we were going to leave our island for the first time since we came here, I felt a little sad. I know I am very often a naughty little thing, and this time I ought to be very much ashamed, for we were going to church.

“But we had been so peaceful and happy all the week, and I did not like any change, I thought. I had read of the weary pilgrim suddenly finding an oasis in the desert, where he bathed his blistered feet in a cool fountain, and, sitting under a shady fig-tree, had a mossy bank for a pillow, and without moving gathered as many figs as he could eat.

“Now, though I am not a weary pilgrim, and, indeed, never feel weary at all, yet it is very pleasant to be in this quiet, still place, leading such happy, calm lives—it is as if we had come to an oasis in our journey of life.

“But I must not record any more of my silly little thoughts, for I have so much to tell—oh! so much! Only, it ought to be known that I was thinking very seriously this morning, just as a person would on an eventful day, for such has this been to us.

“When we got into the churchyard, how sad it was to read the tombstones! Almost everybody had been drowned. I did not feel so much for the poor drowned people as for those who put up the tombstones, for there were such doleful records of their grief. I cried a great deal, and could not help thinking how it came to pass that so many people should have lost all they loved best, and what

they loved most. And here was I, a little insignificant thing, who did not even know what sorrow was. How good God had been to me! I would say my prayers very fervently in this church, surrounded by the graves of all the drowned, for what had I done to be so much more blessed than they?

“While I was thus thinking, an old fisherman came most respectfully up, and said, ‘There was a famous Admiral on board the screw yacht, and that we should see him, for he was coming to church.’

“Oh! how glad I was! I had never seen anything or anybody famous in my life. My heart beat. Clara once sat near a colonel who had been honourably mentioned in the despatches from the Crimea. I suppose he despatched a good many Russians, though Clara could not see, and did not like to ask, if he had been wounded himself.

“Clara has seen a great deal more of the world than I have; for once she passed a soldier, only a common soldier, with the Victoria Cross on. She says she never felt so proud in her life, and if she did, so calm and wise, what should I have done? Indeed, I don’t know; perhaps—but, no—Mrs. Joscelyn says that a true lady always acts like a lady, no matter under what circumstances. I hope, if I ever meet a man with the Victoria Cross, I shall be a true lady, however my feelings may overcome me.

“Clara agrees with me that there is something about a sailor that makes every Englishwoman’s heart rejoice. Even all these rough fishermen seem heroes. And I daresay they have done many heroic acts, battled with waves and storms, and saved lives.

“‘They that go down to the sea in ships,’ see and do wonderful things. They feel themselves so much in the power of the Almighty,

that they rely like children on His help, and thus do and dare deeds that common mortals shrink from.

“And yet they seem to know when one among their number deserves true praise, for they were all so eager to tell my aunt about the Admiral now coming in his barge to their church, and were so delighted when they discovered she knew him well by report.

“‘I believe there is no country where he has not been,’ said my aunt, ‘and everywhere he has left a good name behind him.’

“‘Ay, ma’am, thou’st in the right there. Ben Spurling (thon’s Ben’s father, he were born and bred here), ma’am, Ben Spurling has hed the luck to sail three times wi’ un. Ane time in those lonesome, wearisome Arctic seas, and anither at the vary t’other end of the warld, where Ben says as they comed to a land made oop of ashes and nought else;

and, lastly, he wor wi' un at the war, and if ever there wor a place where summat hot were gangin' on, his cappen (he wor a cappen then) put his ship. Monny a gran' Hadmiral hae been here times on times, but it's most part hevery thing gladsome, as Ben Spurling's fine cappen, now a famous Hadmiral, be come. He be joost for all the world like a friend noo.'

" 'Gossip,' whispered my gossip to me, 'think of our having such an adventure, and all owing to Captain Crabshawe, for if he had not made his ill-natured remark about our desire to show off our bonnets, &c., &c., to the Rampton world, we should not have come to Exe church.'

" 'Do you know, Clara, I could almost love him for it. Think of our not only seeing an Admiral, but an admirable Admiral.'

" 'And still more this wonderful churchyard with all its solemn records.'

“ ‘Yes, indeed—oh! Clara, it makes me long to be good.’

“And then I could say no more. I felt rising in my heart strange and inexplicable thoughts, that gave me very solemn feelings. I was glad when my aunt proposed that we should go into church. I longed to kneel down and pray. I could not help thinking of all the drowned people, and the mourning relatives that had so often come down to this primitive, strange old church. What prayers must have been uttered here! Such cries to God for comfort, such petitions for resignation, such beseechings for a meeting, never to part more! This church, so rudely fashioned, so unadorned, so simple, yet grand, seemed to me sanctified by real prayers that had gone straight from the heart to the throne of God.

“So would I pray this very day, a little heedless, thoughtless creature usually; but to-day,

this hour, a thinking, humble, supplicating soul, who was never more to lose the impression of this solemn time.

“Some people came into the same pew with us, but I did not like to disturb my thoughts by looking at them.

“We were singing that beautiful hymn, ‘Thy will be done;’ and as we did so, I recalled to mind what little Bessie had told us, regarding the Lord’s Prayer:

“‘We must always make a pause between each petition, that we may think of what we are saying, for our old nurse used to tell my brothers and me that an evil spirit is always watching to distract our thoughts, which is the reason so many people say the Lord’s Prayer heedlessly.’

“Mrs. Spooner thinks the real reason is that we say it so often our tongues run it off too glibly for us to pause; but I think the old nurse is right—I find there is a sort

of spell against my saying it wholly undistracted, short as it is.

“As I thought this, I looked up and saw a face, a pair of eyes looking into mine, that reminded me rather of a good spirit than a bad.

“They were large, kindly, gentle eyes. I felt glad we were singing out of the same book, saying the same prayers. God was so good as to fill my heart with pure and happy thoughts. I felt that if I was told I must die, that death was coming for me, that I should go, even as suddenly as the poor drowned people had been summoned away, that it would not make me sorrowful. I should be content to sigh out my soul in the presence of the Almighty. But now the service was over; we were to leave this holy, sacred church.

“My aunt had settled that we should wait at Exe for afternoon service, and I was glad to think that we might spend some more

time, and learn some more lessons from the tombstone. But such a thing happened! Of course I did not think the famous Admiral was there—I saw no one that could be taken for him.

“But suddenly, standing close by me, I saw the gentleman who sang out of the same book with me in church. I suppose he felt as I did, that this act had introduced us to each other, for he said :

“ ‘The Admiral begs me to ask if any of your party would like to see his vessel? She is quite new, and supposed to be a perfect specimen of her class. He is off again to-morrow.’

“And so he really was there. Absolutely this admirable Admiral was standing close by—a little dark unpretentious man, talking to Ben Spurling’s old father, and shaking him by the hand.

“ ‘Gossip, you look disappointed,’ whispered Clara to me. ‘I have noticed that almost

all sailors are little insignificant-looking men.'

" 'Nay,' whispered I back again, 'look at his friend.'

" 'He is not a sailor,' said she.

" 'He is.'

" 'I swear it, gossip.'

" 'Oh! don't, Clara—I love sailors so.'

" 'He is a soldier.'

"While we thus quarrelled, my aunt was being introduced to the Admiral, to whom she tendered her thanks for his obliging offer. Said she to us afterwards, in order to account for a slight hesitation on her part—

" 'I was in fear at first that to accept it would be an infringement of our challenge, but I think there was no article against our visiting a ship; and even if there had been, we should not have been worthy of our name as Englishwomen if we would not have forfeited our chance for the still greater honour of visiting an Admiral.'

“We all echoed this heroic speech of my aunt’s, especially now that the visit was over.

“The Admiral took us in his own barge, and two officers, in fine naval uniforms, went ahead of us to prepare what the Admiral called a ‘gangway,’ and to tell his steward that ladies were coming to luncheon. And it was the most delightful thing possible to feel ourselves so carefully regarded, and put into a chair, with the honoured flag of Old England wrapped round us, and hoisted up on deck as if we were the most precious and valuable things in the world.

“‘I feel,’ whispered I to Clara, ‘just as if I was the Queen. How do you feel?’

“‘I am in the predicament of knowing that we are highly honoured and flattered by all this attention; at the same time, I am called upon to act as if I was the condescending party.’

“‘Just so; one would almost believe by

their manner that this was the proudest moment of their lives. I wish all men were sailors.'

" 'Your singing friend is a soldier.'

" 'I am sure he is not.' (Unkind Clara!)

" 'But, oh! dear me—after all, she was right.

" 'As we were seated at luncheon, my aunt, having made some remark about the Admiral's services, 'of which she could not but be aware, as every Englishwoman ought,' says she (my aunt is so clever at saying just the nicest things in the world in just the nicest way), then answered the Admiral:

" 'Hah! I have not introduced you to a much greater hero—let me make my friend Lionel known to you as Colonel Erne.'

" 'Goodness gracious!—to think of us poor female mortals, who were not fit company for Captain Crabshawe, sitting with and talking to such heroes. And I had been singing out of the same book with him, and perhaps all the

time he had his Victoria Cross in his waistcoat pocket.

“And he saw Clara nod and smile at me, and he asked me why she did so, and I was obliged to tell, and the Admiral laughed heartily; and I really did not know whether it would not be better for me to run away and jump overboard, only the Admiral was just like a school-boy, and I began to be not the least afraid of him.

“All this time I must not forget to say that we left Susan, at her own request, behind, under the care of the old avaricious herring man, who, in his Sunday clothes, seemed quite a different sort of person—clean, sensible, and amiable.

“Susan cared nothing for the honour of the invitation made by the Admiral himself.

“‘I hae overmuch o’ men’s coompany at onny time, Miss Kate, when there’s onny one,’ said she; ‘and fur to go fur to find

mysel' wi' nout else, is what I niver will do for onnybody.'

"The ship was such a splendid fellow, and we saw lots of curiosities, and the Admiral told us long stories of the Arctic regions, which he had visited twice—once as a boy; he would not talk of his own exploits in the Black Sea or anywhere, but all his anecdotes were of other people.

"Of course it came out that we were staying at Luff, because he asked how it happened that there were lights in the house hitherto uninhabited.

"After a while, my aunt told him why we were there, and all about the challenge. Upon which the Admiral went from one fit of laughing into another, saying between each,

"'You will win—of course you will win! Not a doubt—is there, Lionel?'

"Lionel was that gentleman who was so

good as to sing out of the same book with me. But he did not laugh, he only said,

“‘Is it possible that there are creatures, calling themselves men, who voluntarily absent themselves from the society of ladies?’

“I only wish Captain Crabshawe had seen him as he said these words. For my part, I think, if he has an opportunity, he will be, some of these days, as great a hero as Nelson.

“‘Ha! ha! they have not been to sea, have they, Lionel? They would know better if they had.’

“And the Admiral laughed more than ever.

“Now, what do you think the Admiral said? I would not repeat it, but perhaps an Admiral may never say the same thing of me again. And I could not help seeing that he meant me, because my aunt was the only one near, and she is not a girl. Clara was down in

the cabin with Bessie, and Mrs. Spooner was looking at the compass far away. But after all, I won't say what it was, it does not become a person, lately in the company of such heroes, to be guilty of vanity; though, indeed, it is not vanity."

Mrs. Joscelyn here begins to write:—

"But I shall tell—I heard it. The Admiral said, in what was meant for a whisper,

"‘That is an uncommonly pretty girl.’

"And his friend answered,

"‘I never saw a prettier.’

"And indeed my pretty Kate did look wonderfully bewitching, she had such a colour on her cheeks, and such a glow in her eyes, that I did not wonder they admired her. As for the two officers in uniform, they devoured her by looks.

"Clara whispered to me that she was rather disappointed in the Admiral, as regarded his being a hero. He was too young, too

merry, too boyish. She could not bring herself to think that he had even been in danger, much less faced it, as a boy, with such resolute courage, in the dreary Arctic seas. But before very long she changed her opinion.

“Little Bessie, to whom he seemed to take a vast fancy, and to whom he chattered as if he was of her own age (which makes me remark that your really great man assimilates himself to the nature of a child with far greater ease than one who is famous for nothing), little Bessie said,

“‘Sir Admiral, did you ever feel frightened when you were all alone in the Arctic seas, with nothing but ice and snow—desolation and horror all around?’

“He had listened to her with a smile, then he became grave; he took off his spectacles, and, looking at her with gentle serious eyes, answered,

“‘My dear, God was there.’

“And this is the secret of his greatness! He is religious—he loves God; he has only one fear, namely, that he may not love Him enough.

“‘Ah!’ whispered Clara once more to me, ‘how I have misjudged him! I can now understand how a true hero is generally a good man!’

“I never saw any one so delighted as the Admiral was at the history of our challenge. He flatters us by saying we must win. When I say flatters, I consider it so from him. For my part, I have already announced that we must win. Not from any superior merit in us, not because we have more patience, more endurance, and more pluck, but because we sacrifice less. Very little makes a woman happy who is reasonable; and time goes quickly with them, even if their employments are a little frivolous. But with men; alas! my poor

Squire, I feel for you. For your sake I begin to wish I had not cared about my summer curtains!

“But let me describe the beautiful screw yacht; that is, give up all idea of describing her, and merely express the wonder and delight with which we surveyed and examined her. For my part, when I considered the beauty of her construction, and the skill with which she was put together, when I saw her order and completeness, the majesty of her shape in the water, and the grace and ease with which she floated, I was impressed with both wonder and awe.

“If God permitted the creature he had made out of the dust to create for himself, by the comprehensiveness of his own wit, and the force of his own energy, a magnificent floating life-like thing as this ship; made her obey him with merely a turn of the hand, trusted himself in her, as if she was his mother, in the

fiercest storm, in the wildest tempest; loving her as his home on earth, his safest, dearest, happiest abiding place; what might we not expect in another and a better world? What is man, or the son of man, that God should so regard him?

“Such thoughts were very fitting for this holy day. They filled my heart as we were being rowed back to attend the afternoon service at Exe. The two gentlemen came with us, and together we walked among the tombstones; being still rather early for the service.

“Being alone with Arabella for a few moments, I said,

“‘If you have no objection, I have not, to forfeit our chance of winning the challenge. To have the honour of entertaining an Admiral, all other things should be forgotten; and so, if you do not object, we will ask them to Luff to take a cup of tea.’

“‘Very far from it; I agree with you that

no one for a moment ever calculated upon this extraordinary circumstance. It would be quite wicked of us to fail in giving him due honours !’

“‘Of course it would not do for us, only a company of ladies, to ask them to dinner, but merely a visit of half an hour, and the offer of a cup of tea, I think we ought to propose——’

“‘Pray do it, and if the gentlemen are affronted, why, let them be affronted, that’s all I say!’

“‘I do not suppose they will be affronted, because, like us, they must feel a national pride in seeing men so worthily renowned, and much more in holding intercourse with them ; but they will immediately settle at once that we have lost the challenge.’

“‘Let them do so, the cause demands it ; and perhaps, after all, it will be a good thing, and we may get away all the sooner.’

“‘What! tired!—tired already, Arabella?’

“‘No, not exactly tired—but in truth, I do miss Augustus. Though you are all very kind, and I ought to be happy, yet somehow I feel the want of him every minute, to consult with and talk to.’

“‘My dear, I am heartily glad to hear you say so. I hope, before we leave Luff, I shall see you quite thin, through pining for him.’

“‘Oh! no, I am not so silly as that. No, I thank you; Augustus left me of his own accord—Augustus must ask, and very humbly, too, to be restored to my favour.’

“‘Ah! well, settle it your own way. Let us go and take our places.’

“‘When service was over, and we were preparing to return to our island home, I asked the Admiral and his friend to accompany us and partake of some tea.

“‘We shall certainly do ourselves the honour of taking you safely home, but, as for

landing—does not that peril the winning of the challenge? We would die for want of a drop of tea sooner than be the cause of such a catastrophe.’

“ ‘Pray do not think of the challenge, but rather of the honour that you will do us.’

“ ‘By no means. I know enough of the female sex to be aware that they ardently embrace every opportunity of self-sacrifice. It becomes our duty as men to make the sacrifice for them. Lionel, I give up that delicious, desirable cup of tea.’

“ ‘So do I. A cup of poison would be preferable under the circumstances.’

“ ‘We appreciate such noble conduct, all the more from feeling ourselves in a manner somewhat in disgrace with your sex. Nevertheless, I am not sure if we have not already forfeited our claim to win. I fear we ought not to have gone on board the yacht.’

“ ‘You think they will cavil about that, do you, madam?’

“ ‘Alas! that I must allow it of our lords and masters now at Puff, I do.’

“ ‘Then we will put them into the same predicament. After we have landed the ladies, Lionel, we will proceed to Puff. If you and I cannot manage to beguile the gentlemen to dine with us on board the yacht, why, we don’t deserve to be in Her Majesty’s service!’

“ ‘We don’t. I will go to the Horse Guards and resign my commission.’

“ ‘Oh! how nice!’ exclaimed Kate; ‘and you won’t say anything about us?’

“ ‘No, not until dinner is over, and they are about to go back.’

“ ‘Oh! capital! Then they can say nothing against us.’

“ ‘Now, I should like a reward, Bessie.’

“ ‘Dear Sir Admiral, if I can do it, it is done.’

“ ‘Well, it is this—I am very fond of cream, and, in foregoing your mother’s proffered cup of tea, I lose a great treat; if I send a boat here in the morning early, do you think you can spare me a little cream for my breakfast?’

“ ‘Dear Mister—Sir Admiral—you shall have a jugful, and some fresh butter made yesterday by Clara and Kate.’

“ ‘Ha,’ said the Colonel, ‘I dote on fresh butter.’

“Our ‘gushing’ feminine hearts being now relieved on the score of hospitality, we were enabled to take a very friendly farewell. They of course, did not land, and, after watching us arrive at our palace in safety, they departed for Puff.

“We all sat down in a state of chattering and excitement that was very unbecoming a Sabbath evening. Each one had something more wonderful to tell than the other.

“ ‘He told me such stories of that darling Admiral,’ said Kate; ‘I happened to say how nice I thought him. “Nice,” he exclaimed, “my dear Miss Daintree, there is not a hair of his head that is not nicer and better than anything you ever met with. You see how his sailors adore him; you heard his character before you saw him; you can perceive how I dote on everything he says and does, because he is so simple, so noble, so purely good. But if you want to know what he really is, go to his own home.’

“ ‘But may one ask, without offence,’ interrupted Clara, ‘who is the “he” that confided so much to my gossip?’

“ ‘That “he” also confided in me,’ said Mrs. Joscelyn, pitying the confusion of the little gossip. ‘In the eyes of the world the Admiral is a hero—a hero by never-ceasing vigilant fulfilling of duty—a hero by patience, fortitude, and perseverance—but, to his family

he is a domestic hero. He told me, it is a matter of perfect indifference to his wife whether the sun shines or not—she is provided at home with perpetual sunshine. And as for his sons and daughters, they lose their best-loved, chiefest playmate when he is not there.’

“‘I could not fancy him a hero at first,’ said Clara, ‘he was so boyishly full of fun; but how wonderfully quick he was in seeing that we should compromise our chance of winning the challenge if they accepted our offer of a cup of tea! And how sagacious finding so capital a remedy, if our visit to the yacht should chance to be thrown at our poor heads. These little traits show that, under all his gaiety and light-heartedness, he never forgets what it is most right to do.

* Then the Colonel—eh! gossip?’

“‘Why me?’ answers the little gossip, blushing in a most violent manner.

“‘You appeared to like singing out of the same hymn-book with him as much in the afternoon as the morning.’

“‘It would have been rude to refuse.’

“‘But this afternoon we had a supply of hymn-books sufficient for all of us.’

“‘The little gossip turned away.

“‘I think he is the most wonderfully handsome man I ever saw. His eyes have a look something like the look of Augustus in former days.’

(“Oh! oh!” quite aside, not even in the Journal, but understood between the reader and writer. Poor dear Augustus! with his parted hair, his likeness to—however, let us not be ill-natured.)

“‘The little gossip turned back. A speechless indignation flashed from her eyes. Fortunately Mrs. Spooner was in a reverie.

“‘Ah!’ she murmured, ‘dear Augustus—happy Admiral, he was going where Augustus

is. Why, oh! why did I not send a message about his flannel waistcoats?"

"‘The yacht leaves to-morrow at noon,’ said Clara; ‘she will have landed her stores. Colonel Erne says that is the only thing he does not like in the Admiral, he is always in such a hurry. “Now,” continued he, “I should like to stay here until the challenge is over; and the Admiral could have his fresh cream every morning, and I could come and fetch it. But you’ll see he won’t perceive what a comfortable state of things that would be. He will be off, I know, spite of all my entreaties.”’

“‘Where will he go to from here?’ I asked.

“‘“He is going all round the coast; and he will be passing back this way in about a fortnight. Ha! I have an idea. Yes, my fine Admiral! you may be as peremptory as you please, but I am not on duty—I can do as I like.”’

“‘I asked him what he meant; and he answered, that when the screw yacht went out on her errands, the person in command—Admiral or Captain—was allowed to take friends; and he, Colonel Erne, happened this time to be the friend, and was not peremptorily tied to the yacht, but by the links of friendship.’

“‘“I was very nearly not coming; and only think what I should have lost!” he added; ‘looking at you, gossip.’

“‘Why me?’ asks gossip, quite confused.

“‘He thought you such a pretty girl!’

“‘Is it not comfortable to be considered such superior beings, after being so snubbed! I feel quite a disposition to be as good again as I really am, in order to do justice to the high opinion our two new friends seem to entertain of our sex.’

“‘That would be called vanity by some people; and, after all, it is nothing but a most

praiseworthy desire to be worthy of the commendation.'

"'But there is a species of empty flattery that men sometimes adopt towards women, which is truly nauseating,' said our haughty, imperious Clara; 'having been disgusted with that, what balm it is to be duly appreciated! To hear it said that, because we are women, we are good and true, to be beloved. Our very sex makes us angels in the heart of a good man; and he would feel more keenly than ourselves any blot that marred what he considered so perfect. He who treats a woman with courtly deference, yet with a proper sense of his own dignified position towards her, is worthy to be loved, as mortals can love.'

"'How earnest you are, Clara!' half laughed Mrs. Spooner.

"'I feel very deeply on the subject, though I cannot say I have had much experience; still, I know enough to be sure that, if men

treated women properly, there would be very few bad ones in the world.'

" 'That is an assertion I am hardly prepared to carry out, Clara, with my much longer experience.'

" 'Oh! yes, Mrs. Joscelyn, you are—give a woman credit for being perfect, and she will do her best not to forfeit it. Women are so large and magnanimous in their dispositions. They will give way, give up, on the mere supposition that by so doing they can please some one they love.'

" 'And men?'

" 'Certainly not. They reason over what is required of them to do—they argue on it; they destroy the first blush of the beauty of the sacrifice, and eventually it is not worth the having when it is unwillingly extracted.'

" 'Oh! mamma,' said Bessie, running in, 'Susan is in quite a pet because no one will help her to cook the dinner.'

“‘Good lack, and the cloth not laid either! Who could suppose that, locked up in the island of Luff, we should have met with adventures that made us forget our usual duties, and that on Sunday evening, too!’

“‘It has certainly been a most exciting day.’

“‘What a lucky thing we came to Luff!—it would not have happened otherwise.’

“‘To be sure not—do, some one, write that down in the Journal. It will be an excellent thing for our Lords to know, when the challenge is over, that we are indebted to them for spending a Sunday of most absorbing interest—one we are never likely to forget for many reasons, the chief of which is, the seeing, speaking to, and being on such familiar terms with a famous Admiral.’

“‘And I feel as if I had only to recollect that churchyard, to be humbly grateful for my happy life.’

“ ‘And then that grand old primitive church—truly a house of prayer!’

“With these feelings, no wonder that this, our first Sunday at Luff, ended in feelings of solemn happiness and peace.”

CHAPTER III.

PUFF! PUFF!

THE Squire rose in the morning still so full of Scruttles and his story, that all shame for those abominable revokes was utterly gone. Indeed, it may be said with truth he never felt any for them. But there was a shame, an honest shame, swelling the heart of our worthy Squire. It was the shame that a good man feels when he is brought face to face with a depraved nature.

It being Sunday morning, the Squire dressed as if he was going to church, though there was no possibility of doing so. The three

other gentlemen paid the same respect to the day, but Captain Crabshawe presented himself in the suit of a decayed game-keeper. It was true he had not burdened himself with many garments, and if, as appearances seemed to warrant, he had brought but two suits, necessity obliged him to wear the most efficient for work on week-days. A good day's shooting, to look at the one he now wore, might have permanently finished its career.

After breakfast, which was rendered rather pleasant by an attempt at comfort, not to say elegance, for they had a clean table-cloth and some fresh water-cresses, the good Squire made no secret of taking out his bible and prayer-book. With both tucked under his arm, and a cigar in his mouth, he took up a sunny position under one of the cliffs.

While smoking, he delivered himself over to the difficult task of thinking—an employment which always furrowed his fine open brow.

The cigar finished, he gave up thinking, and opened his prayer-book, in which he might be noticed reading with all his heart and soul the whole service, going through it all in the most orthodox and pious manner.

Apparently pleased with himself and his employment, he rose from it in high satisfaction, and, to express this fully, he lit another cigar.

Strolling towards their palace, he encountered Scruttles coming to wash the potatoes in a primitive manner at the well.

Part of the Squire's cogitations had been about Scruttles. He was conjecturing to himself the best mode of opening a germ of interest in the heart of the "excellent convict," which would bud forth into flowers, and eventually produce fruit.

His knowledge of human nature made him steadily reject overtures of a promissory or conditional kind. His desire was to do Scrut-

bles permanent good. If he got him to swear all sorts of oaths regarding his future conduct, under promise of certain rewards, he felt sure that Scruttles would be forsworn. Thus, so far from doing him good, he would only add to the already monstrous mountain of his sins.

No, the Squire felt that, like Sal's master, he must contrive to excite an interest in that strange black thing that no doubt did duty for the heart of the "excellent convict." One white line had been discovered in it, namely, that involuntary respect that Scruttles shared with even the devils themselves, for true, honest virtue. Scruttles must not only entertain a liking, but a certain respect, for the person who was to do him good.

The Squire shook his head over the respect. It was new to him to feel that upon his actions, his words, a human soul might be perilled or saved. He acted so much upon the impulse of the moment, that he could not

credit himself with any extraordinary merit. The Almighty had been so merciful as not to make him hate himself, through the power of some low vice in his organisation; nevertheless, he was but a man after all.

And a man, as the Squire was fain to allow to himself, as weak as any woman in the matter of self-control.

Having, therefore, with infinite labour of thought, delivered himself of all intentions to vie with Sal's master in goodness, it remained to interest the "excellent convict" in a totally different manner.

Without entering into any great depth of thought on the matter, or losing himself in a metaphysical inquiry as to the roots of the question, bringing to bear upon it all the ramifications of ideas that so prolific a subject could produce, the Squire decided to open the campaign by action rather than implication.

In a word, he took five shillings out of his pocket, and presented it, then and there, to the "excellent convict."

The worthy creature so far corroborated the Squire's notion, that "money will buy anything," that he became pleasingly transfixed with amazement. His basket of potatoes, placed just under the spout of the well, was heedlessly kicked over, in an involuntary expression of delight. It was evident that five shillings was an uncommon sight to Scruttles, insignificant as such a sum may appear to ordinary mortals. Five shillings was a thing to be gazed at as a curiosity; and as he gazed (excuse us, reader, what is history worth without the truth?) Scruttles slowly, with emphasis, with expression, spit upon that five shillings.

"For luck, yer honour!" he said, in explanation.

"I hope so," answered the Squire, who

now felt it was his duty, under any circumstances, to follow up the clue established between him and Scruttles. "I give you that for the trouble I gave you last night."

"Axing yer honour's parding, it were a trouble."

"I wish you had told us the truth, Scruttles."

"Axing yer honour's parding, I hadn't time, yer honour."

"What do you mean?"

"I were tuk 'wi the flutters, please yer honour; and when I has the flutters, I mostly knows nothing at all of anythink, axing yer parding, sir!"

"But surely it was easier to tell what really occurred to you than inventing a parcel of—I may say very ugly and useless lies?"

"Axing yer honour's parding, I didn't go

for to think as yer honour wanted fur to know the beginnings and endings of your 'umble servant. I were thinking in coorse as yer honour thowt to 'ave a bit of bemusement like. I'll coom again, yer honour, and settle it all reecht," added Scruttles, gazing at his five shillings, with a sort of vague idea in his brain that he might gain as much more.

"No, no; I do not wish to hear any more; but go on washing your potatoes, and we will talk another time."

"Ay, yer honour, we've mostly a hep o' time for chat in the evenin's, sir—axing yer honour's parding."

The Squire walked away. He felt intuitively that the five shillings must be left to make its own impression, unsupported by advice or lectures. On his way he encountered Spooner, who, stretching his arms and indulging in a vast yawn, yet said, in the most cheery manner,

“Glorious day, Squire! I have been drinking the fresh air in great gulps, and sunning myself in this delicious blaze, like a turtle! What a world it is we live in, Squire!—heavenly, by Jove! And this life is so delightful, as the poet says, I forget whom—

‘Sweet was the scene : apart the cedars stood—
A sunny islet opened in the wood,
With vernal tints——’”

“I don’t understand poetry, my dear Spooner—unless it is a good song. Poetry has such a round-about way of telling the truth.”

“Pardon me, Squire, that is allowable. Poetical license has now become a proverb; and, believe me, without poetry, what a dull, hum-drum, prosaic life we should lead. The gems, the pearls, the beautiful bits I could repeat to you, Squire——”

“No, I thank you, Spooner—I fancy it is nearly lunch time. At home I have always remarked how hungry I am on a Sunday,

and I put it down to going to church. But I am just as hungry now, when I have not been to church at all.”

“That is a most curious psychological study, my dear Squire—one upon which volumes could be written, had one the time.”

“I don’t recommend you to begin, as I, for one, would never find the time to read it. It is enough for me that I always feel hungry on a Sunday.”

“Well, ’tis a healthy feeling, and no doubt, psychologically considered, might be brought forward as proof that Sunday has that invigorating power which a day of rest ought to produce.”

“And my opinion is that it is a remarkably sleepy day, also; which I put down to the simple fact that, having nothing particular to do after church is over, one pays attention to one’s stomach, which, overloaded, naturally produces drowsiness, and if your psychologists

can write a volume upon such a simple fact, why, they are cleverer people than I took them for."

"It is extraordinary the mines of thought that arise from the contemplation of the simplest actions. It is in pauses of life, such as we are now enjoying, that one can realise for a short space the worlds of fancy and creative power so beautifully expressed by Byron—no, Wordsworth——"

"Ha! here's Frank with his apron on—now we shall know what is for luncheon!"

"Have either of you," asks Frank, "seen Scruttles?—he ought to have returned from washing the potatoes some time ago."

"I am afraid I detained him talking—here he comes! What are you going to give us, Frank?"

"I meant to have given you an omelette, but all our eggs are finished. I then thought to roast a rabbit, but there is not one skinned

and prepared. I looked at the beef to broil some steaks, but I took the inside of the sirloin yesterday, and if I cut off more, there will not be enough for dinner. Finally, Sam has placed on the table the bread, the cheese, the butter, also the pepper, the salt, and the mustard—and there are the potatoes, when boiled.”

The Squire laughed good-humouredly, saying,

“I hope the boat will come early to-morrow—we seem in want of everything.”

“Yes, it is most astonishing to me how the things disappear. I imagined we had rats about the place, but I never heard of rats carrying off half a pound of pepper, two bricks of salt, almost as big as you, and divers and sundries of equally odd things. Scruttles thinks they have melted, but I never heard that coffee was given that way, or spices, or an unopened bottle of Worcester sauce—to say nothing of a pair of my shooting socks.”

“That is remarkable, indeed, Summers; no one can have stolen such things, because common sense tells one they can do nothing with them here. They must be mislaid.”

“The fact is,” says Frank, “Puff must be haunted; however, I am anxious to meet a ghost, so I will make it my business to keep a sharp look-out for him.”

It was rather odd that Mr. Summers appeared to address himself to the “excellent convict” rather than the gentlemen, and that worthy creature seemed to feel it, for he suddenly took himself off—out of sight!

“I think,” observed Sir George, coming forward, and looking still more sleepy and lazy than Spooner, “that we made a great mistake not going to Rampton to church. It is so confounded dull here!”

“Haven’t you read your prayers?”

“No, what’s the good? What does one have clergymen for, but to do it for us?”

"I shall be very happy to act parson, after luncheon, gentlemen. I am at present your patient log-man, for I cut the wood for your fires. I am, though an inferior artist, your cook. I endeavour to please you, as housemaid, making your beds, sweeping your floors, and arranging your furniture. I will now strive to be your parson."

"Thanks, my dear Frank; to tell you the truth, I do not exactly know what we should do without you?"

"And do you know the reason why, Squire?"

"No."

"Because I endeavour to imitate the numerous and unselfish virtues of a woman!"

"Oh!—oh!—treason!—treason!"

As King Crab uttered these words, he emerged out of a corner without his coat, a needle and thread in his hand.

“Why, you are doing woman’s work now!”

“Of course, I undertook to do whatever they did!”

“My wife never sews on a Sunday.”

“Works of necessity, my dear Squire, are allowed. Besides, your wife has nothing in the world to do all day, poor soul, but sew! Therefore she is glad of a rest on Sunday.”

“Well, if it is not against your conscience to sew on a Sunday, I shall be glad if you will put a button on my shooting-coat?”

“With immense pleasure!” cried the Captain, glowing with gratified delight.

The Squire went gravely up for his coat, and felt in the pocket for a button that had come off the day before. He was a tidy man was the Squire, and was glad to have his button sewn on. If the Captain had

no scruples about Sunday, why should he?

He carried the coat and button into the Captain's sanctum.

"Leave it here, Squire, and I will bring it out to you in a trice, all right."

But the Squire loved his garments. He had no idea of leaving so precious a thing as his coat to the unclean mercies of Captain Crabshawe's sanctum. There were all sorts of untidinesses, not to say nastinesses, strewed about on the table, and apparently taken out of the royal pockets of King Crab.

There was a rabbit's tail, considerably disagreeable to the nose—the webbed foot of a gull, also too old to be pleasant—a bit of beeswax—a remarkably dirty pocket-handkerchief—two or three crusts of bread, that had been partially buttered, which butter—but enough. Simply, to allow his dear coat to leave his own hands for a moment, and come into juxtaposition with any of these articles, was an impossibility.

He would rather wear it without any buttons on at all.

King Crab, seeing the state of the Squire's feelings, suffered his vanity to conquer his nerve Opiniatum.

"Very well; hold your coat, it's all the same to me how I do it."

But it appeared that, in pleasing his vanity in one respect, he was grievously affronting her in another.

After a deal of manœuvring, which, in a woman would have been called coquetry, Crabshawe brought out of his pocket a case—out of the case spectacles, which, with much care, he adjusted on his nose.

"What! Crab!" shouts the Squire (for his ordinary speech is so remarkably loud, that when astonished, he cannot help but shout), "come to spectacles; who would——"

"Hush! Squire—hush! not so loud. These are not spectacles, they are magnifiers. No

one ever threads a needle without them."

"Elizabeth does—and little Bessie too."

"They use bodkins; I confine myself entirely to needles, owing to their sharper points. There is a vast deal of difference between bodkins and needles."

"I should think so! Bodkins have tape for thread."

"My dear Squire, you are quite deceived. Now, don't breathe so hard, it affects the thread, which sometimes is most obstinate. Ha! there, 'tis done; my needle is threaded, Squire; and now for the knot—but stay! for a button, double thread is the thing!"

"True for you!" remarks the Squire, admiringly.

"Now for the knot."

Never was such vexatious thread, or such a vixenish knot. Either the thread would not be knotted, or the knot being made, suddenly disappeared. At last, in despair, the Captain

laid the needle carefully down, and, taking the refractory ends in both hands, he achieved a knot that might have been made of rope for the trouble it gave him. But at last all was ready—needle, thread, and knot. Notwithstanding this desirable state of things, King Crab still paused.

“To tell you the truth, Squire, I am always in a little bit of a puzzle as to whether one begins with the coat or the button.”

“True, that’s a devil of a puzzle; it reminds me of that pretty little French woman who said she never could remember whether to say cock-weather or weather-cock. Let us ask one of the others.”

“No—no, it will come to me quite naturally when I have got hold of the coat.”

Vanity was not going to permit King Crab to show himself off in magnifiers, lest they should be mistaken for spectacles. And now the Squire’s beloved coat was in those hands—

those unwashed hands of Captain Crabshawe. First, it was placed one way, then another, then upside down, then inside out. Finally, inspiration condescended to visit King Crab, and in a short space of time the needle was seen coming through the coat within an inch of the proper place.

“Hurrah!” exclaims the Squire, “here she is!—very near, Crab!”

Crab tries again, and this time hits the exact spot so nearly, as to feel it would be tempting Providence to try again. Consequently, he slowly, triumphantly draws the needle forth, then the thread, nervously as the knot approaches nearer. Finally, the knot does its duty, and refuses to go further. Captain Crabshawe gives a little tug—the knot resists; he gives a harder one with the same effect. Satisfied, he breathes freely, and remarks,

“I knew it was a capital knot!”

Full of gratified importance, he is about to

put the needle through again, when the Squire reminds him of the button.

“Ha! true—I was thinking so much of the knot, I forgot the button.”

The button is soon in its place. It is held on to the coat with the grasp of a man saving himself from being drowned by clutching the branch of a tree. Crab makes one or two excellent shots with his needle to and fro, which excite the Squire’s warmest approbation. At last he bungles—there is one hole in the button that is most aggravating. In endeavouring to force the needle through it, *nolens volens*—the point becomes seriously damaged.

“Come, it does not matter—the button is on and fast, which is all we want, Squire—therefore, I’ll fasten off.”

“But Elizabeth always goes like this,” said the Squire, winding the thread round the button.

"Well, it is not a bad plan—I will do it if you like, though unnecessary, in my opinion."

The Squire considered it more orthodox that it should be done. So it was done, until so much thread was wound round, the button looked as if it had a sore throat, and had enveloped it in a sort of necktie. But at last the coat was delivered up to the Squire by the Captain, who declared the button was as safe as a church.

"So it ought to be," said Frank, peeping in, "for you have been nearly half an hour sewing it on. Luncheon is quite cold."

"Pray say potatoes, Frank, for I am more hungry than ever, and you know there is nothing else."

"Mrs. Joscelyn would have sewn it on in two minutes."

"Pooh, Summers! Thank goodness I am not Mrs. Joscelyn."

"Thank goodness Mrs. Joscelyn is not you."

"You may say so, but perhaps she does not."

"I will give her credit for having the same opinions as myself—meantime, while you are eating your luncheon——"

"Potatoes, Frank."

"Of potatoes, will you help George through a serious difficulty? He has only one clean shirt left."

"The boat comes to-morrow with the clean linen."

"But I want my shirt this evening, and I have not a clean one for to-morrow."

There was no answer to this distressing tale, which, perhaps, was caused by the fact that Sir George's hearers did not feel the case so acutely as he did.

"You see, Crab," continued Sir George, fretfully, "women are of use—what in the world should we do without laundresses?"

"Laundresses!—pooh! I have washed my own shirt many a time."

“And ironed it?”

“To be sure, and wrung it out, too, better than any laundress ever did! Besides, there are machines now, and it would be a good spec to send for one. You put your shirt in at one end, Follett, and it comes out at the other ready to put on.”

“An American dodge, I conclude,” says Frank.

“But is it starched and aired?” asked Sir George.

“Of course, though why you want your things aired when you have your own body on which to air them, is a mystery to me. I thought that was a folly confined to women.”

“Since you have mentioned women, Crab, hear my resolve: I won’t wash my own clothes—I WILL have them done by a WOMAN!”

“Don’t roar, Squire—I was only joking. Of course I don’t mean you absolutely to wash. I was merely mentioning this machine,

which at once proves we are not dependent on a woman to wash our shirts."

"You may say what you like; my private opinion is that, as regards washing, woman is much the best machine you can have!"

"Take your own way, Squire—I have learnt one thing during the last week, and that is, Mrs. Joscelyn has a deal to put up with."

This remark tickled the Squire's fancy. He retired to a corner, and chuckled over it, until he fell asleep.

Spooner and Follett had already exhausted their capabilities that way; and so went for what they call a stroll.

Frank put on his apron to make, as he said, preparations for dinner.

Had anyone peeped into the Captain's sanctum, they would have seen him, magnifiers on nose, doing what he called "darning."

Over which he also fell asleep.

At four o'clock the Squire awoke, cheerful and content.

He found Frank enlarging the mind of Scruttles on various points.

"Why, Frank, I thought you were going to be a parson, and read the evening service to us?"

"The parson was ready, but there was no congregation!"

"I will go and call them."

By dint of great exertion, Spooner and Follett had got up enough drowsiness to take another nap. They gladly obeyed the Squire's call. Spooner had consulted his whiskers so often as to what he should do, that they were, every hair, standing apart, and he looked a wild man of the woods.

King Crab was not to be roused. So Frank read the psalms and lessons (he would do no more) to a congregation of three people. By the time this was done it was only half-past four.

“What are we to do with ourselves!” sighed Sir George; “two hours and a half to dinner, and no pleasure in anticipating its arrival. On the contrary, the less we think of it the better.”

“If we had anything to cook, we might have amused ourselves with each concocting a new dish,” remarked Spooner.

“But as we have not, it is the best not to think about it.”

“We ought to have made Sam and Scrutless attend Frank’s efforts as parson.”

“Do you think they care about that sort of thing?”

“They have souls as well as ourselves, I suppose!”

“It is a remarkable fact,” says Mr. Spooner, “that a man may have a soul, and yet be ignorant of the fact.”

“How do you make that out?”

“His conscience, you know, is deadened!

‘Breathes there a man with soul so dead—
Who never to himself has said—’ ”

“That we are remarkably dull. I wonder what the ladies are doing?”

“They meant to go to Exe church!”

“By-the-bye, suppose we have a row out, and go and reconnoitre Luff?”

“Would that be fair?”

“Of course it would; the sea is a highway!”

“I should like to go and see that two-funnelled fellow that came into the bay last night. Let us have out the boat, and row round her.”

“But I must cook the dinner, Squire.”

“Pooh, Frank, there is nothing but that lump of beef. It must be a stupidity passing the ordinary bounds of servants’ brains, if Sam and Scruttles cannot roast those few bones without spoiling them.”

"I should not mind, if we had anything else to eat?"

"Then roast it at once, and let us dine; and go for a row afterwards. Our luncheon was not so heavy as to make us indifferent to dinner, let it come when it may."

"That is delicious; moonlight upon the water—under cover of dusk, we can approach Luff, and look upon those we love.

'She was a form of light and life,
That seen, became a part of sight;
And rose where'er I turn'd my eye—
The morning star of memory.'

"For heaven's sake! no more poetry; let us go and help Frank to cook the dinner. But what are you gazing at, Frank?"

"I see a boat, Squire."

"Is that all?"

"It is coming here."

"No! Give me the glass; are the ladies in it?"

"No; not a vestige of female hat or bonnet. It is undoubtedly rowed by Her Majesty's sailors—'tis a boat from the two-funnelled government steamer."

"Are you sure they are coming here?"

"I am never sure of anything until it has happened."

Our four gentlemen forgot all about dinner, in their excitement regarding the boat.

"She has an Admiral's ensign flying!"

"Go-o-d h-e-a-v-e-n-s!" exclaimed Mr. Spooner, vehemently pulling his whiskers.

"Let us," said the Squire, glowing, "go down to the landing-place, and be ready to receive him."

"Where's King Crab? Let him put on all his majesty to receive the only being on earth I envy—a British Admiral."

King Crab was called, and as he emerged from his den, none of his subjects were proud of him; but he was indifferent to their opinion.

“Good gracious!” murmured Spooner, as they walked down to the landing-place, “an Admiral, a British Admiral—what have we got to offer him in the way of a spread, Frank?”

“There’s the remains of the salt, the pepper, the mustard—”

“Gracious heavens! we dare not offer him anything.”

“It would be extremely daring if we did. But here he comes—a brace of them.”

“What an agitating moment, after our calm Sunday!”

“Calm Sunday!—don’t call it a Sunday, Spooner, but the dullest day I ever encountered. I shall cut my throat if we pass such another.”

The boat had now touched the shore; the sailors had tossed their oars, and the Squire, beaming with every kindly feeling, was handing the gentlemen out of the boat, who, in

the eyes of the others, appeared two unpretentious gentlemen, and nothing more.

“Allow me to introduce myself to the king of this island,” said the oldest, who was little, dark, wearing spectacles, but appeared brim-full of fun and jollity. Saying which, he handed his card to the Squire; for though Captain Crabshawe pressed forward, his general appearance and dress were, as hinted before, by no means royal—in fact, Sam was more presentable in the character of a gentleman. As the Squire read the name aloud, there was heard a murmur, and seen an expression from each, of the most unbounded astonishment and satisfaction.

“And this is my friend, Colonel Erne. We are here—at least I am—on duty. A happy chance has given me the vacant post of one who has to cruise about, every now and then, to visit the lighthouses. Not having much to do to-day, we took a little turn in the bay, and hope we don’t intrude.”

Intrude! never was word so antagonistic to their feelings. They were honoured—flattered—for ever obliged by the visit! Had the Admiral known of the serious difficulties into which they had been plunged to get rid of the time, he would have corroborated the truth of their remarks.

“We were about,” said the Squire, “doing the same thing. Struck by the beauty of your vessel, we meant to row round her this evening.”

“It will give me great pleasure to receive you on board. We heard at Exe, where we have been to church, that some gentlemen were located here for the purpose of shooting.”

“Did you see any ladies there?” asked the Squire, with a pretence at being indifferent to any answer.

“I saw—” here the Admiral paused; he looked round—“I saw an uncommon pretty girl.”

“Elizabeth—Bessie!”

“ Arabella !”

“ Miss Daintree !”

“ She is the prettiest girl I have ever seen,” observed Colonel Erne.

“ But you saw more than one ?” asked the Squire, now anxiously.

“ Yes, there were four ladies and a little girl.”

“ Do they seem happy ?” asked Mr. Spooner.

“ Very much so, I should say, if blooming looks are a proof of health and happiness.”

“ One of the ladies is my wife,” said the Squire.

“ You are much to be envied, sir,” said the gallant Admiral.

“ And one of the best a man might wish to have ; she has not the heart to say ‘ No ’ when she can oblige, however much she may be put about by it.”

“ Fortunate for you, sir,” again answered the polite Admiral.

“Ha! ha!—so I think myself. Now, will you, sir, honour us by taking some——”

“Hush! Squire; we haven’t anything,” whispered Frank.

“Pooh! there’s wine.”

The Squire’s hospitality rose in proportion to there being nothing to offer; heartiness must make amends for destitution. But the Admiral declined everything.

“No,” said he; “it is getting late. I am off to-morrow pretty betimes; so, if I am not interrupting more important matters, I hope you will all place yourselves under my command, and take ship with me.”

In so great a hurry were they to do so, that they were all in the barge, and some way from the shore, before Frank recollected his duties as cook.

“The beef! oh! the beef!” he whispered vehemently.

“Hang the beef!” said the Squire; “I

will go without my dinner rather than lose the pleasure of an hour's conversation with one of England's finest sailors."

Though the Admiral took no notice of this by-play, he overheard it, and got red in the face trying to control his risibility.

They were about three quarters of an hour getting to the ship, and leaped on board with the alacrity of kids. No need now to wonder how they were to pass the time; it was sure to pass all too quickly.

No Englishman can go on board one of Her Majesty's vessels without a feeling both of pride and self-satisfaction. The noble creature commands love and admiration at once, both of which are enhanced by the exulting feeling that what is the Queen's is equally the nation's; and what belongs to the nation is individually the property of each person—for each helped to create her.

Thus our five Puffites exulted and glorified

over the two-funnelled yacht as if she was their own private property, built to their order, and planned from the wonderful cleverness of their own brains.

Mr. Spooner, in the exuberance of national pride and individual self-glorification, essayed to personate the manners and walk of a British tar. He scrambled up to the highest parts of the ship, and altogether poked himself in, and out, and under, and about ropes and other impediments, so that his whiskers got behind his ears, and his back hair was much rumpled.

The Captain sat on a deck-stool, his legs far apart, his position uncomfortable, but his countenance bland and smiling in the extreme. Sir George, always the perfect gentleman, was fraternising with Colonel Erne. During their discourses you might have picked up a good deal of information regarding what had been seen and said in Exe church that day.

As for Frank, he was on the quarter-deck. He had the Admiral's own private telescope in hand, the one presented to him by—well, we must not say. Frank was gazing at a long misshapen little island not a mile away. Did he see the flutter of any petticoats thereon?

Meantime, the Squire clings to the Admiral as a limpet to a rock. The Admiral is a man after his own heart. He says “yes” and “no” downright.

They had now been almost an hour on board, all loath to go back to Puff—unlimited smoking, that piece of roast beef, that “excellent convict.” An odour of something toothsome permeates through the balmy evening air. The Squire, sniffing it, becomes conscious of the pooriness of his luncheon. He suddenly begins to think, if that piece of roast beef was before him, he could devour it, bones and all.

“I say, Frank, we must go back; Scruttles

will over-roast that beef—we shall find it a cinder.”

“Unfortunately, Squire, I gave strict orders it was not to go near the fire until I was there to see it done. We shall be obliged to wait, after we arrive, until it is roasted.”

“Good heavens! I have a wolf in me now!”

At that identical moment the Admiral, who had gone below, came on deck, and going up to the Squire, said :

“It would be extremely gratifying to Erne and myself if you would kindly excuse all deficiencies and dine with us. I cannot promise you anything like a proper dinner, but, such as it is, you would oblige us greatly by helping us to discuss it.”

Now an invitation to dine with two heroes, whose very nod was an honour, was in itself a gratification that the Squire felt could only happen to him once in a life-time. But under

the peculiar circumstances of the case, the honour was nearly swamped in the extreme seasonableness of the invitation.

As for any remembrance of the Challenge, its various clauses, its penalties, its forfeits, not one of the five gentlemen seemed to have the least remembrance of its existence.

They congratulated each other heartily as they washed their hands, and made the best toilette they could. As for Frank, he capered like a boy; the Squire thought of the beef with contempt. King Crab always enjoyed dining at anybody's expense rather than his own, and Spooner argued in his own mind it was of no use being an Admiral unless you had champagne every day for dinner.

Sir George alone was moody. His mind kept harping on the admiration Miss Daintree had excited at church, for he had extracted sufficient from Colonel Erne to discover that this "uncommon pretty girl" was she.

Sir George enjoyed, in common with many of his sex, the feeling of desiring to have what others admired. Or, in other words, he only hankered after a thing in proportion as he saw it estimated by others.

Captain Crabshawe had rather weakened his interest in Miss Daintree by unnecessarily thrusting her upon him as a wife. But gradually she was regaining her place in his esteem (he had no apparent affections as yet), and the unexpected praise of two strangers (whether they were heroes or not was of no consequence), elevated her so high, that he was attacked with some sharp pangs of jealousy.

Nevertheless, it was something to be able to eat a dinner which Scruttles had not only never seen, but which it was impossible he could have ever been near. Besides, the yacht would be gone to-morrow, so "to dinner with what appetite we may," said all. Just before

they sat down to it, the Admiral begged a gun might be loaded.

“As soon as grace is said, fire it off,” ordered he, which was done. Did no misgivings even then cross the minds of any of the Puffites?

If Mr. Summers had been looking out at Luff with the Admiral’s own telescope, presented to him by —, why, I really believe he might have seen feminine hands waving feminine pocket-handkerchiefs. But no—simple-minded, unsuspicious creatures, they imagined nothing and thought of nothing, but that they were about to be regaled by an excellent dinner.

For it was an excellent dinner.

Oxtail soup, soles, brill, unexceptionable lobster sauce—a splendid sirloin of beef, with the undercut intact—such a Yorkshire pudding! such a snowy mound of shredded horse-radish! such a salad! one might suppose the sea was one entire kitchen garden, so profuse were the vegetables and condiments.

Delicate white fowls nestled on each side of an arched, highly decorated, resolute tongue. Four side dishes, any one of which would have been the "*pièce de resistance*" at Puff, being composed, one of larded sweetbreads, another of pork curry, a third of broiled kidneys, a fourth of "*cotelettes à la tartare*," made the hearts of our Puffites expand. This course was followed by ducklings, and a young mountain of green peas. A plum-pudding, and a variety of other sweets, making Mr. Spooner long to be a camel, who is so far superior to human beings, that it possesses two stomachs. And lots of champagne!

Under these pleasant influences, the Squire, always candid, became wholly confidential, and related what would have been their dinner had they gone home. A piece of roast beef, truly, but the undercut gone, used for cutlets; no Yorkshire pudding; no salad—a salad, indeed! they had forgotten the taste of one.

King Crab, it must be allowed, drank more champagne than was good for him, and luckily dosed off whenever there was a pause in eating. Spooner was happy as

“The Count von Strogonoff, sure he got prog enough,
The sly ould Divil, undernathe the stairs.”

Sir George forgot his jealousy; Frank was like a boy.

Nothing could exceed the amiability, the condescension, the courtesy of the Admiral and his friends.

At nine o'clock the barge was reported as ready to take the gentlemen home; for the Admiral said he did not wish the sailors to be later than eleven in turning into their hammocks.

Full of thanks, of gratitude, of happiness, of dinner, of champagne, the Puffites bid adieu to their kind entertainers.

“Hark ye!” cried the Admiral, just as they

were about to depart. "Have you not made a challenge with the ladies we met at church?"

They all exclaimed in the affirmative.

"Well, they also did us the honour of paying us a visit on board to-day, and had some luncheon. I was to tell you this from them. And, in case you thought it any infringement of the challenge, they are now square, for you have been so good as to dine with me!"

"Ha! ha! that's capital! That is the best joke I ever heard. I forgot all about the challenge, but of course it is all square. We are quits on that matter."

"All right," answered the Admiral. "I will tell them in the morning what you say, as I am going to send a boat to Luff for cream."

"Pray do, and give my wife my love, and tell her I should have been heartily ashamed of

her if she had missed the honour you have done her, by any punctillio regarding our foolish challenge. I owed you a good deal before, Admiral, but I take it as the kindest thing of all, your showing my two Elizabeths this fine ship. So once more adieu, and good luck wherever you go!"

And so they parted.

"I hardly think it was perfectly correct Arabella trusting herself with strange gentlemen, and not having the protection of her husband's arm," murmured an aggrieved voice.

"Lord save you, man! great men are always good men. Elizabeth might go with them to the world's end, and I should not mind."

"You are always so sanguine, Squire; you credit people with goodness, knowing nothing about them."

"And I should be much ashamed of myself if I did not. I expect them to think well of

me, and the least I can do is to pay them the same compliment."

"I wonder where Miss Daintree sat?"

"Just like the wimmen," growled an unsteady voice; "they are always gadding. I wouldn't be you, Squire—I wouldn't be you, Spoon—I wouldn't be——"

The rest was lost in a snore.

Extracts from the Journal left at Puff.

"Just returned from a visit to the screw yacht 'Cannibal.' On board were two gentlemen—heroes, whom the world at present delight to honour; and all I can say is, that they deserve it. When I have read of all their daring—their daily facing of wounds, mutilation and death, their wonderful pluck, courage and endurance, I have been lost in admiration. Now that I have seen them face to face, my admiration has increased a hundredfold. I am proud of them as Englishmen, I love them for

being good men. There is not a trace of pretension about them. Unassuming and gentlemanly, they frankly tell their tale, not so much to glorify themselves, as to relate the wonders they have seen, to those who may never witness them. I could love the Admiral like a brother. One might have supposed a man lost in the ice for four years, isolated as it is the etiquette a captain should be (in a manner) from the rest of his crew, cut off from all communion with family and friends, frozen in his affections as he was frozen in the body, would have come out of that ordeal a soured and cheerless man. But, on the contrary, so genial a fellow I never met. He has the heartiest laugh, the sunniest smile, and the jolliest manner possible. And so kind as he must have been to my little Bessie! Lucky little baggage! to have an Admiral, and such an Admiral, to play with. During one part of this day, I was inclined to consider

it the most dreary, wearisome time, I ever spent. Now I have no hesitation in saying, this day shall evermore be recorded as a white day in my calendar. The Admiral is not half my size, and to think of all he has undergone! Colonel Erne is a fine fellow. It is curious how frank-hearted and genial sailors are. I wonder to what it is owing?"

Another handwriting:

"My dear Squire, æsthetically considered the peculiar physiology of a sailor's mind, always contemplating one train of ideas, engendered by a single focus of existence, naturally tends to make him what he is. Could we carry out this branch of the subject, and bare it home to the very root of the matter, we might, by the certain laws of reason and light, elucidate the question you propose; and, I doubt not, satisfy ourselves fully as to the normal state of the British sailor's peculiar idiosyncrasy. But, as in a journal of this sort, philosophical

matter is much out of place, I shall confine myself to saying that the champagne was excellent. As I looked upon these two heroes, I must own to feeling, notwithstanding our pleasant position, and the excellency of the curry, a little envious. Why had nature, or rather fortune, debarred me from being either of them? What was there in my 'physique' that was so far different? I must lead an uneventful life in a bank, and never taste in the remotest way the intoxicating draught of heroism. For the life of me, I could not see why my soul, burning with ardour, vehement as their own, was left to flicker out a dull existence—unknown, unseen, unrecorded! Such thoughts as these, doubtless, sow the seeds of discontent. I acknowledge my fault; let me be frank. I cannot—I do not—I would never presume to emulate, to match myself with the Admiral. No; that idea is presumptuous. But the Colonel—a man of my

own age—my own stature—our hair much the same colour—a general resemblance—let me ask, why is he about to be knighted, and become Sir Lionel, and I remain plain Augustus Spooner?

‘The chiefest action for a man of great spirit
Is never to be out of action.’

“Thus saith the poet, and I presume he is right. With that I must content me. The more so, because of a fair and gentle being, who shall be nameless, who has entrusted her happiness to me. When I received her vows and gave her mine, the very act debarred me from any other duty. All the ardent and burning longings for distinction—for a name—must be repressed.

‘Fame and an early death, that is the doom
Of all who greatly dare. Such as plunge
At once into renown, and give their blood
For reverence from unborn posterity.’

“This I could do, but I must not do it. Another life has a claim upon me. I am no

longer answerable for myself alone. And shall I murmur at this? I will not. At the same time, I hardly know if the ladies were justified in going to church without any male protectors. Would it be well to give them a hint? 'Tis on matters of such vital importance that the heart of a husband throbs with more feeling than the brain.

“A. S.”

“Especially when that brain is decidedly under the influence of too much champagne.”

These words were written in a disguised hand.

Another now continues the Journal :

“I do not care whether Spooner had taken too much champagne or not, but I agree with him in thinking there was a want of caution in the ladies going to church in such an out-of-the-way place as Exe, and meeting such a

number of men, as they must have done. It was not right.

“Like Spooner, I refrain from mentioning names, while I say that there are certain people whose good looks excite admiration, without any intention on their part. That frankness of manner, so admired by the Squire as characteristic of a sailor, is sometimes much too demonstrative to be pleasant.

“Even the Admiral—who, by-the-bye, is extraordinarily young for an Admiral—could not withhold his admiration, and it is astonishing how quickly that sort of thing is understood. I perceive that the Admiral has not a grey hair in his head; he is even more youthful in manner than in person. I should have fancied that so much hardship, being frozen for so many years, would have aged him. Not that I find fault with him for admiring a pretty girl—he is quite right to do it; but I object to people saying they are doing a

thing, when all the time they are not doing it at all. It is quite against my ideas of propriety to say, 'I am going to church to say my prayers,' and all the time you are observing the beauty of your neighbour; and she, equally inattentive to her duties, is quite aware of, and delights in, your admiration.

Not that I blame a girl for liking to be admired—very far from it; but I do object to a girl not being content with one admirer at a time. I respect the Admiral, a man would not be a man if he did not; but I have no fancy for his friend. I don't take to 'Sirs,' which I hear he is to be made so, by being knocked on the back by a sword, and desired to rise up Sir Nobody Nothing, and in his case only for bearing being shot at better than other people. I should have regarded him as more of a hero, if he had lost a limb, or a feature. He does not even seem to have suffered in health.

“I cannot help fancying a good many people get much more than they deserve, while others don’t secure what they really have a right to.

“I should no more have dared to admire her, in the way he evidently does, though he has only met her to-day, than—but I forget, this is the Journal. Let me record in it that our first week is over, and I am very glad of it. But, of course, more on account of the ladies than ourselves. Allowing that we have had some disagreeables—some *contre-temps* that we did not expect. They, of course, must have experienced such things twofold. I propose that next Sunday we go to Exe church. We need not speak to the ladies, but, at all events, we can satisfy ourselves that they are not suffering, and we are at hand in case another crew of one of Her Majesty’s ships should feel themselves called upon to take forcible possession of that out-of-the-way church.

“It may be possible that lighthouses require

oil and stores, but it strikes me as very remarkable that they should stand in need of them this particular week. I feel inclined to be up early to-morrow, and waylay the Admiral's boat as she returns with the cream. Who will give that cream?"

The curious writing begins :

"I know no more than you, and, what is more, I don't care. I am glad to be on good terms with the knavey, but I don't think much of the Adl. He may be a wise won, but he is not my stamp of a wise won. Miss Daintrey is no dout a pritty gurl, but she nose it. I should say the Adl. was wed, and to a Tartar, and has lots of gurls. He likes the wimmen, but, pore fellow, he is a sailor, and that is the reeson he knows nothing about wimmen, or he would be wizer. The dinner was good, considerin."

Another takes the pen :

"The Admiral is 'wed,' and not to a Tartar

—he has both boys and girls—so his friend told me. But you monster, Crab! you are disgusted with what he said about women. It made you ashamed of yourself, I hope.

“Highly gratified by the honour of his visit, deeply grateful to him for providing us with a dinner, the only real dinner we have had for a week, ready to kiss the ground under his feet (indeed, that we all are; I must do ourselves the justice to say that we have done nothing but boast to each other of what each hero said individually to each of us), you are now, when his back is turned, upbraiding the Admiral for the noblest sentence a man could utter.

“When Spooner asked him of what action in his life he was most proud, he answered,

“‘Of licking the cockpit when I was a midddy.’

“‘I mean thing,’ stammered Spooner, confused by the answer.

“Of what thing am I most proud? If you designate her as a thing, I am most proud of an Englishwoman; for, go where you will, they are superior to all other women, in morals, habits, and appearance!”

“I could have kissed the Squire, he roared his applause so loudly.

“Crab comforted himself for this heresy by not suffering the bottle of port to leave his custody as long as there was port in it.

“I was glad to see George as pleasant as the Squire. As for you, Spooner, you feel suspicious that ‘the uncommon pretty girl’ is your wife. Do so, by all means; she cannot be too pretty in your eyes. When I have a wife, if ever I am so fortunate as to obtain her whom I love, I shall conceive all poetry written in her praise, and hers alone. I shall interpret all commendations as meant for her. I shall expect all eyes to dwell upon her; and

I shall think it only a debt paid to her beauty and worth, to lay my life, my love, my all, at her feet."

CHAPTER IV.

“LUFF IT IS.”

AFTER the excitement of the visit of the ‘Cannibal’ yacht into Exe Bay, there can be no doubt about it that the ladies felt dull. A sort of apathy came over them.

The Journal in Mrs. Joscelyn’s handwriting admits that life was a little burdensome, for she stands convicted of making some sort of excuse.

“Excitement,” she writes, “is as necessary to some natures as the food they eat, the air they breathe. In women especially, enthusiasm and zeal kindle a flame that awakens their tenderest and most susceptible feelings. But in

proportion to the amount to which they have been roused, does a certain reaction take place, unless they make use of this excitement to act upon the mind as a beneficent elixir. In which case the impressions roused into life renovate the heart, as healing medicine invigorates the frame. I am afraid we have not so applied them. If the visit of the 'Cannibal' had taken place towards the end of our probation, it would have been better for us. At present it seems as if nothing more exciting could occur to us—as if all other adventures must be commonplace.

"We can talk of nothing else, and think of nothing else. We remind each other of all that passed, and correct each other as to what either hero said to each of us. We have told each other over and over again what our individual feelings were on hearing the gun that announced the entrapment of our 'Lords' into the same scrape as ourselves.

"Truly that was a proud moment !

“Our feminine powers had proved sufficient to induce the lion to betray the lion, or, in other words, for our sakes, weak creatures as we were, two male beings had agreed to circumvent five of their own sex. The thing was done—the gun sent a reverberating echo of triumph all through the bay !

“The next morning we awoke still flushed with excitement and happiness. The three girls, attended by Susan, went down to the landing-place with a bottle of cream, some fresh butter, hot rolls, and the last of our eggs. The Admiral’s boat was seen on its way. As it approached, Colonel Erne was perceived steering. Rather surprised at their long absence, I went to see what caused it.

“My little Bessie was seated in the boat. He held her as a hostage, he said—for not daring to land, he had no other means of detaining them. But a gun from the ‘Cannibal’ came booming over the water.

“‘Ha! he told me he would do that if I lingered. That is the worst thing I know of the Admiral; he is always in such a hurry! When he has done his business he will go away; now I want him to stay here a week.’

“‘He wants the cream for his breakfast,” said Bessie, ‘and he must have it.’

“Taking advantage of a sudden relaxing in his ward and watch over her, Bessie sprang over the side of the boat and joined us.

“‘Now that is too bad—I shall come on shore!’

“‘Oh! no, don’t!’ pleaded Kate—‘think of our challenge.’

“‘I will drown myself sooner!’ he answered, sinking back on his seat.

“‘Good-bye,’ I said, by way of hint.

“‘Stop a moment. Will you let me come back? May I not come and visit you some day?’

“ ‘Of course—we shall be only too delighted. Once more, good-bye.’

“ ‘Stay—stay one moment—how shall I find you?’

“I gave him the direction, saying, for the third time, ‘Good-bye.’ As I did so, a second gun was heard.

“Off we all ran, as if pursued by a bull. Not on our account should the Admiral have to wait for his friend, and the cream for his breakfast.

“No wonder we felt a little sad. Bessie could not settle to her lessons; Kate spoilt the pudding for dinner; Arabella was moping; Clara alone remained happy and gay. She had discovered, she said, while they were detained by Colonel Erne, the seaweed called ‘*Porphyra Laciniata*,’ commonly known as Laver, and very good to eat.

“‘Mrs. Joscelyn,’ she said to me, after dinner, which was a dull and stupid affair,

‘we must do something to rouse ourselves. If I was not afraid of its being too true, I should like to rally my little gossip on losing her heart so suddenly. I almost thought I saw tears in her eyes as the great “Cannibal” steamed out of the bay.’”

“We all felt her loss, Clara; the bay looks quite forlorn without her.”

“What are we to do if we begin to be dull so soon?”

“Oh! we are not dull, it is merely that sort of feeling which belongs to us women after excitement. Our nature does not permit us to do things by halves!”

“But I shall not be content with a mere victory over the gentlemen. I want to prove to them that we have been twice as happy, ten times as merry, and a hundred times as contented. In short, that we are in no hurry to return to their agreeable society.”

“That is just my feeling, Clara,” chimed

in Mrs. Spooner. All I pray and desire is, that they may have a lesson that will last them all their lives. When one sees gentlemen like the Admiral and his friend, it is enough to disgust one with creatures like some I could name."

"Come, you are a little severe. Suppose we each begin to write down all we know of the Arctic regions. I mean all that our two new friends have told us," said Mrs. Joscelyn.

"And we will sum it all up, and read it aloud at night," exclaimed Clara.

"If that is the case, let each tell what we know to one, who shall prepare it for our critical notice."

"That one shall be you."

"No, I have neither time nor patience. Do it yourself, Clara!"

"Then be merciful to me."

"Put it into rhyme, gossip."

“Oh, ye powers, she speaks! Why, my dear sweetheart, I fancied you had lost your heart—tongue, I mean.”

“That was lucky for you, otherwise you know you deserved a good scolding.”

“Come, let us quarrel, it will amuse us.”

“I am amused without.”

“Then will you come and help me to write about the Arctic regions?”

“Oh! no; it makes me shudder to think of it.”

“Ha!—

“She loved me for the dangers I had passed;
And I loved her that she did pity them.”

“Gossip!”

Kate ran after Clara to punish her. Clara ran for her life. Whether they really quarrelled is not known.

Clara's Paper.

“In writing about the Arctic regions, I am in a manner upset at the very beginning, by being unable to realise the amount of cold that I have to describe. Moreover, it affected different people in different degrees.

“When mercury is at the freezing-point, we are to understand that it is seventy-one degrees below the freezing point of water. In the great frosts that have occurred in England, the river Thames was frozen over, fairs were held on it, and people erected houses and lived in them. Also, not from exposure or want, people have died in England from extreme cold, and nothing else.

“But in the Arctic regions, subjected to a state of atmosphere to which this was a mere nothing, Esquimaux babies lay in their mothers' skin hoods, without covering, and did not seem to feel it. The least exposure of

skin on the part of a European caused the part to be frost-bitten. When the Admiral went at certain times of the moon to make astronomical observations, he did not dare to touch the instrument with his naked hand. The effect would have been the same had he clasped a red-hot iron bar. The skin would have been entirely taken off his fingers. The moisture of his breath congealed as it left his lips, and encrusted his beard and moustache with ice. The pain of thawing this was intense.

“They could not even touch a pannikin of hot tea without their mittens. In the different expeditions that were taken from time to time by sledging parties from the ships, they used to build themselves at night a snow hut, making their tent the roof; as long as the lamp was burning, they kept pretty warm, but the intensity of the cold was sometimes so great, that the clothes they laid aside to creep into their

sleeping bags would be frozen stiff by the morning.

“Food is required of the strongest and most nourishing nature. There is a craving for it, so that even the disgusting gastronomic ‘delicacies,’ delighted in by the Esquimaux, did not appear to them as nauseating as might be expected; in fact, they had great rejoicings over killing a walrus, and regaled themselves like aldermen on its oily, fishy, strong flesh; recording, with pious thankfulness, that they obtained twelve hundred pounds of good food out of him, to say nothing of ever so many casks of delicious blubber?”

“Oh! Clara,” exclaimed Bessie, “how nasty! I will never believe that darling Sir Admiral ate blubber.”

“No, he drank it, dear, melted.”

“Oh! oh! shocking! I am sure you invented that.”

“I allow he did not tell me so for a fact,

but he is going to give your mother the tusks, for it was a very fine walrus. They are twenty-two inches long.”

“Pray go on, Clara; I am impatient to hear more.”)

“The thing that seemed to have been the worst thing to bear—in fact, he shuddered at the bare recollection—was the long night of winter.

“It seemed as if Arctic voyagers must feel that darkness which so afflicted the Egyptians, which, as you may recollect, is spoken of in the Bible as a ‘darkness that might be felt.’

“It appeared to bring on a torpor of mind as well as body. Artificial heat is known to weaken all the tissues of life, while the warmth caused by exercise invigorates and strengthens them. The sort of stagnation that came over them during this long night of nine months was harder to fight against than any dangers

they encountered. All sorts of ill-humours would accumulate not only in the blood but in the temper.

“‘I believe,’ said the Admiral, smiling with that soft womanly smile that comes straight from a good heart, ‘I really believe a man might almost quarrel with his mother in the Arctic regions.’

“In fact, bound down to the narrow limits of a ship, circumscribed in space, in a sort of visible darkness, with few amusements, and no occupation, no wonder that capacious tempers and evil humours rose strong and intolerant. There was nothing genial to awaken kindly feeling, there was nothing to rouse them from torpid selfishness, but an awe of the region in which they lay, lonely, ice-bound; a solemn vague perception that, desolate, forlorn, and isolated as they were, the Almighty eyes of God regarded them.

“In most of the ships that have gone to the

Arctic regions, their crews have been more or less under the influence of this irritability. Enduring a slow, lingering life together, facing a sudden, almost inevitable annihilation from one hour to another, witnessing God's power in the mightiest and grandest forms, proclaiming 'What is man, or the son of man, that I should regard him?' isolated from all human ties, none of these things have sufficed to bind these sufferers together.

"It is recorded that one celebrated Arctic navigator, commanding an early expedition, was on such bad terms with his first lieutenant, who was his own nephew, that they did not speak to each other the whole time they were out.

"And when the latter discovered the North Pole by the inflex of the magnetic needle, he kept his secret until he returned to England, and his uncle learnt the first news of this important discovery, made by the vessel under

his own command, from the public newspapers."

"(“Pardon me, gossip, for interrupting you. Do you think all this arose from the effects of the ice, or because they were all men and no women?”

“What say you, Mrs. Joscelyn?” asked Clara.

“Kate is mischievous. She wishes to insinuate that perhaps the Puffites are not all on speaking terms just now.”

“Naughty little gossip!”

“Not at all naughty. Her idea is a perfectly just one. Captain Crabshawe has a frightful temper, Mr. Joscelyn, we know, is very hot, and I am fully aware that Augustus is dreadfully touchy.”

“And all ready to start into action without any icy influence. Well, I dare say they have squabbled a little. My Squire must say what he thinks, whether it be civil or not,

but, as they all know him pretty well, I have every hope that they will pay no regard to anything he says. But pray go on, Clara, you have collected many more facts than I expected.”)

“The Admiral told me he should never forget seeing a star on the ninth of August. It was early for one to appear, and he was not looking for it.

“The Esquimaux are intelligent people, the women more so than the men, which seems caused by the fact that the women do all the work. The men certainly kill the game, but that is all; the women have to haul it home and cut it up. At these times, when they have plenty of food, the men think of nothing but gorging themselves. They eat until they cannot help themselves, when their wives come and do it for them. They stuff the amiable husband’s mouth full of some delicacy, which is cut off close to the lips. When they perceive that

time and exertion have caused its absorption, they fill the mouth again, and so on, until Nature intercedes, and refuses more. Then sleep comes to the rescue.

"The Esquimaux women picked up the English language with great quickness, and one of them made a map of the coast that was surprisingly correct."

("I think it ought to be made known publicly that, at all events in the Arctic regions, the women are superior to the men.")

"I do not think that will help the women of England much, Arabella, for you may be certain the men of England will resent being placed on a par with an Esquimaux."

"I shall take care, however, to let Augustus know."

"That you can do; it will help to remind him, that when there is a thing to be done, women are quite ready to do it, if the men decline.")

“Many and great as were their dangers, it is yet characteristic of all Arctic voyagers that they remembered God was greater. From the first beginning of Arctic voyagers in the Tudor reigns, they were as remarkable for extraordinary courage and endurance, as for the simple and child-like piety that we could not fail to notice in the hero who has just left us. On one occasion especially they had as clearly the signs before them of a certain death gradually approaching, as a man who is ascending the steps of a ladder to be hanged.

“The ship had been driven by a current that bore them along irresistibly, at the rate of six miles an hour, towards a dangerous bay, where the ice was breaking up into great floes, which were being piled up one upon another, with a power nothing could withstand. It is at these periods that there is fearful danger of a ship being nipped between two of these masses or bergs. Should the

current that was propelling the ship also drive them, only the greater power of God could prevent the frail wooden home of the Arctic mariners being crushed like a nut between them. They saw before them two bergs, which never lost their position with the ship; this showed they were being driven at the same rate. Yet such was their course, they were gradually nearing each other. Not the most ignorant sailor on board but knew the ship was racing either to deliverance or certain death.

“For more than an hour this suspense continued, until hope had vanished from the most sanguine heart. Hawsers were thrown out, boats were manned to retard their progress, all seemed in vain. One berg touched them—with frightful impetus, it drove them against the other. By the mercy of God, this swayed, rocked, heaved, and, falling over on the other side, forced the ship, by the

impetus of its plunge, safe over the fatal channel, into a fair and smooth breadth of water. But the copper covering to the bottom of the vessel hung like shreds of worsted, or was rolled up like tissue paper.

“The power of the currents in those seas must be tremendous. Bound and confined by icy manacles that are mightier than themselves for ten months of the year, they revenge themselves when freedom comes. What sport they make of the ice that was their master! They roll him up in mountainous blocks, piling up masses that would serve for ranges of hills. They form him into fantastic shapes, they split him into pillars and columns, until fancy is cheated into believing one sees the domes, the fair towers, the pinnacled turrets, and tapering steeples of a large cathedraled town. If he lies smooth and deep, as thick as the crust of the earth, as strong as adamant, still a subtle mysterious power rends

him from end to end, tears him into shreds, drives him as it were to the very confines of earth. Then is this rigid, dismal, gloomy waste turned into a garden of beauty and loveliness. Verdure leaps forth as if by magic. The air has a delicious balm in it—a freshness and purity that nothing in art or nature, nothing but itself, can be likened to it. An immortal elixir, quaffed by the angels in paradise, can alone express its power and virtue. Flowers spring forth under its influence, with the hues and loveliness of an ethereal world. The living flowers, the butterflies, sport in the rosy air, coloured with gorgeous hues of the most surprising brilliancy. Tufts of moss spring up like emerald gems, while birds flock from every quarter, filling the heretofore dead silent air with a thousand voices of happiness and life. The sun arrays himself in perpetual splendour, painting the now beautiful world with the loveliest hues, and, as if content with his work, he

never withdraws night or day from the contemplation of it.

“But like the scene in a play, it seems as if this beautiful summer lasted but a few hours. It is as a dream, gone before realised—followed by a long night, where the soul has to fight with the demons of sloth and apathy.

“In imagining myself in the Arctic regions, I have reflected what means I should adopt to keep within me, pure and strong, the sweet springs of kindly affection, the energy of a warm heart, the gay spirit of a sunny nature. In a word, I tried to picture to myself how the Admiral employed himself through that long night of almost solitary confinement, so as to emerge from it animated, vivacious, happy. For the captain of a ship, by some etiquette that may not be infringed, has no companion. He is supreme, but he pays the penalty of an exalted position by being alone. Thus he dwelt in those desolate regions more solitary

than the hermit in his cell, or the eagle on his crag. For the one was visited by devotees, and the other would survey the world below from his eyrie. He was not only alone, but burdened with an awful responsibility. Every order he issued bore with it almost life or death to the lives under his command. Every step he took brought him face to face with perils that might daunt the most courageous heart. Condemned by circumstances to lead a life thought by the over-merciful to be too rigorous for our worst criminals, he yet was accountable for a duty the most arduous and hazardous ever given to mortals.

“It is a life such as this that makes men turn to supernatural power. They feel their own insufficiency; they crave sympathy and encouragement. There is but one being who can give it—they turn to God. Surrounded by scenes that compel them to believe in some mighty agency—guided to life and safety by

the unerring course of a star—the matchless regularity of the moon, and the simple, but unutterable laws of nature, men in the Arctic regions meet the Lord at every turn they take. They bless Him daily for daily deliverance; they praise Him hourly for unnumbered blessings, and worship Him every time they raise their eyes, for ‘His wonderful works.’

“I think he of whose Arctic experience I am writing is one of those beings who, like Abraham, proved his knowledge of God by faith.

“He ‘trusted that he would deliver him.’

“So God was his friend, and talked with him. God was his counsellor, comforter, brother. Over the ice, through the snow, in awful solitude, in fearful straits, in perils, in difficulties, in the sight of death, he walked with God. In that long night of darkness and inaction God beneficently communed with His servant.

“Need we wonder that, on emerging from it, a glory of hope, of happiness, of faith, shone in his eyes, and has remained there ever since.”

(“Your inference is excellent, Clara. The Admiral gives me the idea of having so lived, that he has nothing to fear from God or man. With great simplicity of character, he adds the greater determination to do his duty. Thus he is never overcome by the weaknesses, temptations, waywardnesses of erring human nature.”

“Your judgment must be correct, Mrs. Joscelyn, for his companion told me various anecdotes and traits of his friend, that prove your words to be true. At the same time, he seemed to imply that he told them to me in confidence, so I did not feel myself justified in writing them down. At the same time, there can be no reason why I should not relate them to you.”

After Clara had done so, and they had all expressed their pleasure—

“I shall certainly erect the Admiral on the topmost pinnacle of my favour. Evermore he shall be the hero I shall worship,” quoth Kate.

“Gossip, you are in the right on’t. Regarded as a man who turned from the path of fame, to follow that of duty, you could not crown a more worthy hero.”

“I know nothing about Arctic affairs,” pleaded Mrs. Spooner. “What did he go for?—and whose were the missing ships?”

Such an amount of ignorance startled our Ladies into exclamations of such vehemence, Mrs. Spooner was offended.

“I am not like some people, always reading the newspapers to find out shocking things—wife-beatings, and murders, and suicides, and poisonings, and all that. I read what Augustus calls the ‘Hatch, Match, and Dispatch’

column, and also the fashions; and perhaps a Divorce case, if it is not very bad. But I think women have no business to meddle with politics and public affairs."

"But even I know about the good Sir John Franklin, who went for the honour of his country, to discover the North-West passage, and that he died at his post of duty, on the 11th of June, 1847, and never came home to see his poor wife and children."

"That is all very well, Bessie; some people may know one thing and some another. Now, I have no more idea of how much cold they endured, than I had before Clara explained it—how can I tell what mercury feels?"

"Let me explain it in this way. They have had such intense cold, that the thermometer has been known to be seventy-five degrees below zero."

"Who is zero?"

There was a laugh.

Alas! that human nature can least bear to be laughed at.

“And,” as Mrs. Joscelyn said, “just as they were all so moved and interested in Clara’s reading, their hearts all soft and tender!” The sudden change was like the return of night, after the beautiful Arctic summer.

The truth must be told. The ladies came to words, there was a quarrel, there were tears, there was a burst of passionate invectives.

During this outburst, Mrs. Spooner announced for certain, what had been before only suspected, that she had never been properly educated. In other words, she was not only an ignorant person, but rather delighted in being ignorant, that is, if one might judge by the little pains she took to make herself any better. But to be laughed at for it was quite a different affair.

“Laughed at, indeed! by a girl who had gone about the world in rags, and had for her relations people who were not gentlefolks! She, Mrs. Spooner, was very different. It is true that her health had been too delicate to permit of sending her to school, but she had always lived with people who had dinner napkins every day, and who would not go in an omnibus to save their lives.”

“If one is estimated,” retaliated the haughty Clara, “according to such tests, I rejoice in my rags, and am proud of my relatives.”

“And so do I for you,” echoed an indignant little gossip, flushed with ardour for the fight in defence of her beloved Clara.

It is a certain fact that the quarrels of the female sex are generally of such a sort, the less said about them the better.

Loving the ladies heartily, as it is our duty to do, I think it best not to write down the

recriminations, the upbraidings, the sobbings, the wills and the won'ts, the snips and the snaps, and all the other little items that make up a female quarrel.

It sufficed that in half an hour Mrs. Joscelyn sat alone in the saloon of her palace.

Bessie had been sent to bed at the first onset, though, the combatants being all anxious to make themselves heard, of course she might just as well have stayed, for their voices penetrated even into the kitchen.

Clara had walked off in stately dudgeon, but she suffered more from wounded vanity than from the words of Mrs. Spooner; she had taken such pains with her Arctic paper—she had been anticipating, as is natural in a young author, a meed of praise—she had even looked forward to a “second edition”—which means, second reading of her essay—and now behold! Probably, to keep the peace,

she must never more mention its existence. To avoid a quarrel, she must be as careful as in the very Arctic regions themselves. She had loved the subject on which she had written. Her fine enthusiastic nature made her understand the life of the Arctic voyagers, and, in understanding, she had identified herself with it. Thus she may be pardoned if her heart in the matter suffered from the rude shock caused by an unseemly quarrel. The vanity of authors is (alas! poor souls) a part of their being.

There is the love of mothers for their offspring, of a wife for her husband, of the lover for his beloved, but none of these equals the adoration of an author for the child, the wife, the love of his brain. He knows it can have no other parent; he is the only spouse, no lover can claim a prior right, he is the sole being responsible for its beauties or its faults. Without being vain, but with a tender, pa-

rental, fond care over his work, all the more because it is an orphan without him, he watches over, guards, loves, and protects his literary offspring; he mourns over it, as over a dead child, if unsuccessful; he rejoices and is jubilant if a modicum of praise is accorded to it. Poor authors! few but themselves know the throes, the heart-burnings, the pangs, the fears that assail them when they send forth, into a criticizing and unfeeling world, the child which has been delivered from their brain with such infinite care and labour!

But to return to Clara. She had a fine mind, she felt the indignity of having her lofty thoughts thrust aside for such folly—yes, such folly! She was angry with herself for answering Mrs. Spooner's little spits of wrath. She could not forgive herself, so she stalked off to bed, her nose in the air, her back like a ramrod. And the dear, little, wilful rose-bud, all a-glowing with indigna-

tion and dripping with tears, went with her.

Mrs. Spooner was hysterical.

"I—I w—will g—go to Au—Augustus to-morrow! He—he will t—take c—care I—I—I am not insul—sult—sulted!"

Thus she sobbed, and also went to bed.

The fact of the matter was that they had all said a great deal more than they intended.

As Mrs. Joscelyn sat perplexed and alone, she naturally thought a good deal of her own position.

Having vaunted once or twice openly, and a great deal more than that, privately, to herself, that they should certainly win the challenge, she reckoned that it would be more her fault than that of her companions if they did not do so. She was quite alive to her own powers of entertaining and endurance; she had meant to devote herself to her companions, and she was so far perfectly correct in thinking that

few were more fitted for such a tax than herself.

She had every confidence in her own powers. But here was a state of things that had nothing to do with her at all—that arose out of the merest accident, and, from a beginning of nothing, threatened to annihilate every hope she had, and sweep away from under their very feet every hope of winning.

She was a just woman, and began her cogitations to herself by acknowledging that she deserved a rebuff. Having atoned to her conscience, she began to cast about in her mind how she could smooth matters; in what way she could so beguile her companions, that they might meet in the morning with some show of peace and forgiveness.

There was Clara. Mrs. Joscelyn shook her head to herself, as she thought over the probability of making Clara put forth the first show of penitence.

Clara was one of those good creatures who cannot compromise in any way. If she thought Mrs. Spooner had been in the wrong, nothing would persuade her even to mollify that fact. She would, in her magnanimous fashion, say,

“Of course I forgive and will forget everything, but you were in the wrong.”

Now, with regard to the amiable A. S., there was no doubt about it, if ever so wrong, she must be treated as if the injured party—she must be “soothered” over. This must be accorded her, because she is one of those whom Solomon describes as unanswerable.

“She was a silly woman, but,” as Mrs. Joscelyn acknowledged to herself, “it is more difficult to manage a fool than a wise woman. Suppose I did the disagreeable work of flattering her into good-humour, all my efforts will be useless. Clara alone can administer the balm that will allay her irritation. I must say it is very provoking, and I heartily wish

I had never trusted our characters, our chance of winning, in her hands. It is against my principles to persuade Clara to act a part, or say what she does not think, therefore I fear I must give the matter up. If a grain of sense returns to Arabella before the morning, we may weather this storm yet; but if not, then we lose the challenge, and for a quarrel that is only less silly, because it is more provoking."

Mrs. Joscelyn took care to be up early: in fact, though the last to go to bed, she was the first to make her appearance.

Kate came down with her rosy lips pursed, her dainty little head bearing itself airily high, her hands pertly seated in the pockets of her apron, and her heels almost two inches from the ground.

"Good morning, aunt," says she, with an assurance that foreboded awful things from Clara, and poking her face towards her aunt to be kissed.

"I do not kiss noses," said Mrs. Joscelyn, gravely.

"I beg your pardon, auntie," murmured the little thing, immediately meek as a mouse; and withdrawing her hands from her pockets, she put up her mouth beseechingly.

"Now, Kate, I desire you to be forbearing and good; for if you don't help me, Arabella will go home, send for her husband, and we shall lose the challenge."

"I won't have my gossip insulted. I will lose the challenge rather than that!"

"Oh! very well; since such is your decision, go off and milk your cow, and don't let me see you again for an hour."

"Very well, auntie," and the little maiden departed with a demure smile on her face, and the kitten on her shoulder.

All the challenges in the world might be lost before she would be untrue to her first love. For it very often happens that the

first phase of that charming feeling in a young girl's heart, begins by a devoted and magnanimous adoration of one of her own sex. Too timid, or too innocent, to permit the budding feeling to expend itself upon a man, she has no scruple in pouring out all the wealth of her heart upon another girl; and how warm, spontaneous, true, is that sweet love!

Mrs. Joscelyn loved her little petulant Kate more than ever, though she had lost her as an ally.

Arabella appeared next upon the scene of action; she was jerky in manner, restless in mood, and altogether seemed in that nervous state that portended a fit of crying. But she kissed Mrs. Joscelyn affectionately, she kissed Bessie with ardour, and she ran to meet Kate, laden with things for breakfast, all eagerness—kissing her with great fervour, notwithstanding that Kate looked at

her out of her great large eyes with a sort of amused astonishment.

“Now,” thought Mrs. Joscelyn to herself, “I can see that Arabella is rather ashamed of herself, and wants to make it up. All depends upon Clara. The Heavens permit that she may be at least forbearing—here she comes!”

Enter Clara with a run and a spring, as if she had been Kate or Bessie.

“Gracious goodness! to think of my being so late! Good morning, Mamma Joscelyn—good morning, dear Mrs. Spooner—good morning, Bessie. Now see what I am going to do—I am going to burn this horrid thing that caused us all to quarrel last night,” and pop upon the fire went the Arctic MS.

“Oh! oh!” exclaimed Mrs. Joscelyn.

“Oh! oh!” screamed Mrs. Spooner.

“Oh! oh! oh!” shrieked the little gossip. Heedless creature; she rushes forward, she

snatches the Arctic MS. out of the fire, she rolls it in her apron to extinguish the flames, she forgets her apron is only made of muslin. There is a flare, a sudden great flame, a fizzing, a scream, a scuffle.

Mrs. Joscelyn has pulled the pretty thing down on to the floor, and enveloped her in a great shawl. In one minute was she in danger and out of it.

"See!" she exclaims, as they helped her up safe, but not unscorched; "I have it safe!" and she holds up the MS., scarcely injured. She has defined in her sweet girl-love the treasure it was to her gossip, and does not seem to care for the danger from which she has been so mercifully preserved, so that it is safe.

Now Mrs. Spooner has a right to cry, but it is for joy, that the darling girl is safe. Clara is pale with anguish and fright, and kisses the little rash thing in agony.

Mrs. Joscelyn applies a little cream to the pretty ear slightly scorched, and the corner of an eyebrow.

Ah! Kate, when you next behold yourself in the glass, will you think Clara's MS. worth the loss of a curl of hair, half an eyebrow, and the whole fringe of lashes from one eye? We believe she cares nothing for them in comparison.

"My child," observes Mrs. Joscelyn tenderly, "you have had a narrow escape—you are fairly scorched all down this side."

"I thought there was a great smell of roast meat."

But Mrs. Joscelyn reproves her for levity, and calling Susan, opens the prayer-book for their morning prayers. She is deeply moved, her voice falters, the tears are running down her cheeks as she thanks God for a great deliverance.

They know she is not easily moved to tears ;

they feel as she feels; a deep awe of gratitude fills their hearts; they rise from their knees subdued and trembling, but most loving to each other.

So thus ended that famous quarrel.

Nothing more was ever heard of it, not even when Clara was requested to read her MS. once more, thus realizing her hopes.

“You have a knack of writing, Clara; suppose you compose a story for our amusement.”

“I will try; but meantime, my gossip and I were talking about different historical characters that we admired, and we thought it would be rather amusing to act and speak, as we think they would have acted and spoken.”

“I think the idea novel. Do you mean us to select your characters, or will you do it yourselves?”

“We will choose the first set, because we

shall wish to make the experiment by ourselves at first."

"Shall we have one to-night?"

"We will try. It depends upon my little gossip's burns."

"Oh! they are mending fast, and if I never get any more eyelashes on this eye, people can easily see by the other that I had some once. Then when they hear the tale I shall be quite a little heroine."

"Quite a little goose," responded her aunt; "I have not recovered the shock yet. It is strange that you are more giddy than ever, child, instead of being subdued."

"I am upheld, auntie, by the consciousness of having saved that valuable——"

"Will you dare to mock me, unkind gossip; as if the most valuable MS. in creation was equal to your life."

"Upon my word, you flatter me; Milton's *Paradise Lost*, or one of Shakespeare's——"

“Hush! my dear children; I cannot bear any flippancy regarding that terrible moment.”

“I wish,” said Bessie, hearing a falter in her mother’s voice, “that you girls would act something out of the ‘Arabian Nights.’ Now, do try the story of the ‘Singing Tree,’ the ‘Talking Bird,’ and the ‘Golden Water!’”

“And where are we to obtain those wonderful things, Miss Bessie?”

“Mamma told me I was to interpret the story allegorically. Don’t you think you can help me?”

“Well, sit down, and let us try. Here we are, seated under the shade of the largest tree in the island, by way of helping us to solve the riddle. Listen, Bessie; don’t you hear it singing?”

“I hear the wind rustling through the upper branches, yet there is no breath of air down here to stir my hair.”

“Then the tree is singing. This is Nature’s music; and there comes on the soft wings of the wind a low chorus murmured by the sea; together, they fill the air with a soft pleasant sound.”

“So they do! And after all, I am as fortunate as the princess; I can have a singing tree, wherever there is a tree.”

“Very true, Bessie. It is useless to long and cry for what we have not got; it is best to go and seek for it, or for something like it.”

“But the talking bird, mamma—I am sure Clara can never show me how to obtain such a wise creature.”

“Why, Bessie, can you make nests like the birds?—can you poise yourself on agile wings and fly through the air as they do? They can do what you cannot, and, hark! how they talk to each other!—‘Twit! twit!’ says the little cock sparrow; and if you watch you will see

that, as soon as he says this, down comes his wife, down come all the children, and they all begin to eat. Papa Sparrow looks out, he sees some one coming! 'Twee! twee! twit!' and away they all go like little myths. You may watch the birds all day, and always discover something wise and curious about them. And no wonder, because God was their teacher."

"Allegorically considered," answered Bessie, sententiously. "I will allow that will do for the talking-bird. At all events, I had better be contented with your view of the matter, as I am not likely to have any other. And how about the golden water, the least drop of which cast anywhere, increases into a great fountain?"

"Ah! Bessie," answered Clara, "can you not find for the golden water the most beautiful of all similes? The least drop, as you say, poured anywhere, increases to the utmost volume,

might fill all space, yet never overflows to destruction. This is the water of baptism, or the spring of religion. Pour the merest drop into the heart, and it fills it with a fountain of living waters. Only sin, evil, and perverseness can dry it up; and even then it has but to be cleared of one pebble, when it will burst forth again, pure, fresh, and sweet as ever. The golden water is near at hand to us all; we have but to stretch out a hand, to open the mouth, and we are blessed with it!"

"I like that," murmured Bessie, with a glow in her eyes; "the allegory of the golden water is the most beautiful of all. Thank you, dear Clara; how happy the world seems to me, now that I perceive I may go out into it, and meet everywhere the singing tree, and the talking bird, but, above all things, that I have the golden water in my heart! I will try, mamma, never to let the spring be

dried up through any sin or naughtiness. It shall always be flowing and bright."

"Please God, Bessie," suggested her mother.

"Yes, please God," answered Bessie fervently.

This kind of conversation did not come amiss to the ladies, who were still under the influence of Kate's narrow escape.

The boat from Deep-Cliffs had come and gone with their different matters. There had been no excitement about its arrival, and there were no orders for its return before that day week, which would be a Tuesday.

It had been settled that the gentlemen should have their fresh stores and linen on Mondays, and the ladies on Tuesdays, because it was inconvenient to visit both islands the same day.

As Susan brought away the last package from the boat, Mrs. Joscelyn perceived an

unusual visitant on her face, namely, a smile.

“What has happened, Susan?”

“They be uncommon dull at Puff, mum.”

“How do you know that?”

“The boatmen, mum, says as how master have ordered ’em to come twice a-week, instid of onny once. And they wor a-arsking me, mum, if we was a-wanting ’em to cum a bit oftener ’wesels.”

“What did you answer, Susan?”

“I tuk the liberty o’ sayin, mum, ‘No,’ I says, ‘we ain’t awantin’ noffin, much obleeged, and if so bees as the meat ’ud keep sweet, we shouldn’t be a-wantin’ on ye at all,’ I says; because, mum, I’d do the washin’, I ’ood, and I’d larn the ladies hironing!”

“Susan, did you happen to ask the boatmen if Mr. Spooner was well—quite well?”

“I didn’t fur to go fur to hax how he were in especial, mum, but I tuk the liberty

of 'oping master and his friends 'ad their 'elth, mum."

"And what—what was the answer, Susan?"

"They be all uncommen well in their 'elths, mum, but they doesn't seem so well in their minds, mum."

"Good heavens! suppose Augustus is fretting?"

"I hope he is, Arabella, for your sake; but do not let us ask any more questions of Susan—I hardly think it is fair."

"But surely they have lost the challenge sending for the boat three times a-week?"

"We are not supposed to know that; I fancy they will be honourable enough to tell us."

"You are far too forbearing, Mrs. Joscelyn."

"I never found that the indulgence of this feeling ever brought me an ill turn. On the contrary, it has done me so much good service, I am not tired of practising it."

“But suppose they don’t tell us—will not you?”

“No, I think not—all the more because from their habits they ought properly to have the boat oftener than ourselves. They want their newspapers, and though gossip is supposed to be our peculiar vocation and delight, commend me to a party of gentlemen to obtain it in perfection. They cannot live without it.”

Clara and Kate having given notice that they were ready with a scene for that evening’s entertainment, great excitement ensued.

It was politely intimated to Susan that she might attend if she liked, to which she graciously replied,

“That she warn’t quite sure but that she might find a bit o’ time to fool away.”

Mrs. Spooner, having made various inquiries as to the quality of the guests she was about to see personated—whether they were kings

and queens, lords and ladies, milkmaids and clowns—came rustling down to tea in her best silk, in honour of the Earl and Countess of Nythsdale, for such was the rank of the *dramatis personæ*.

“The Earl of Nythsdale,” related Clara, “being attainted of high treason by King George I., and thrown into the tower with the Earl of Derwentwater and many other friends, was expecting the fulfilment of his sentence almost every day. The punishment for high treason was beheading, with other frightful customs that I need not mention. The wives and noble relations of the attainted lords had made every exertion for a remittance of the sentence. The King was about to shed the richest blood of his realm, but neither that nor their submission, nor any future promise, nor any compromise, was entertained by the king. He forgot the chief quality of his position, namely, mercy. Thus the Countess

of Nythsdale was about to visit her lord, perhaps for the last time. It is this final scene in the prison between them that we are to try and portray for your pleasure."

This prologue having been spoken, the two girls retired behind a screen.

Presently a cavalier, with a dark blue riding-cloak thrown over one shoulder, with a black velvet hat on his head, adorned with a long drooping feather, was seen seated at a table, one hand concealing his face. He had scarcely been the object of their attention two minutes, when a rustle of silken garments was heard, and immediately appeared, with her hair drawn back from her face, a black hood on her head, a lovely little Lady Nythsdale. She throws one arm round the Earl's neck, and half kneels before him.

The Earl (personated by Clara).—"Sweet wife, you are here once more. I have counted the moments of your absence."

The Countess (personated by Kate).—"Oh! my good Lord, fear for thy precious life alone detained me."

The Earl.—"But now thou must think no more on't, Winifred. The last hope is gone. The cruel discourtesy of His Majesty to my gentle wife hath well-nigh unmanned me. I pined to see her sweet face, and kiss those pleading, sorely-treated hands."

The Countess.—"Think no more of it, my dearest Lord; thou would'st rather hold me thus, the cast-down and rudely trampled-on wife, than a dainty lady that had no soul to brave a royal frown. But I thought shame to tell thee, husband, of that scene, for it redounded not to His Majesty's good name—of whom God forbid that I should speak disloyally. Nathless as you know the truth—that indeed from the entrance door of the royal chamber, on the threshold of which a pleading wife bent her knees, and humbly prayed her

husband's life, I was dragged across the room from end to end, for neither would I forego my urgent prayer, and neither would His Majesty yield me thy pardon, Thus, my most dear Lord, I, who, for thee, would kiss the sword that took my life for thine, have, by my vehemence and mighty passion, but hurt your cause. His Majesty did command, before his grooms and pages, and other menials, besides the lords in waiting, and his chief courtiers, that 'yon frantic woman' (truly it may be so) 'should not again be let into his presence.' Dost hear, my Lord, thy wife, thy Countess, is forbidden the palace?"

The Earl.—"Ay, Winifred, I hear; 'but I sorrow not for that which you deplore—(and the rather because I built me no hope thereon); but that my gentle Countess should have had such ungentle usage—she who blushed at her husband's notice, who lingered bashful behind her peers, who drooped like

the violet in garish company—to be thus maltreated by the royal hand, to be hurried from the presence as a thing unseemly to the royal sight; in truth, wife, it becomes not a man about to meet his Maker to think on the matter.”

The Countess.—“Think thus and so much, my Lord, that thou art with justice incensed against His Majesty. He hath forgotten the kingly nature of a king, and it is therefore with more reason thou wilt list to other deliverance than at his hand. A prince that is so ungentle to a woman, so discourteous to a lady, so disloyal to a wife, methinks deserves not that a noble heart should kiss the hand of such a king, and say, ‘’Tis well.’ The nobles of this land inherit with their blood the high privilege to hold their lives in hostage for their king, but he must be a noble prince.”

The Earl.—“Sweet Winifred, stun me no

more with words, wherein I scent a secret purpose. Unbosom thyself, and seek not to blind my reason with thy wife-like arts."

The Countess.—"Thou divinest truly, my Lord; and dost thou not also see that mine eye hath a light and happiness in it—long, long banished until now. All is prepared. It was that which kept me from thy side, my dear Lord. All is prepared—we wait—I wait—but—but for thy consent."

The Earl.—"Ah! wife, in that hesitation I read thou fearest to gain that consent. A flushing, changing cheek, downcast eyes, a faltering voice, bid me prepare to hear that my noble Winifred has forgotten her duty in her love; she will counsel an escape that will not beseem mine honour."

The Countess.—"And is life so vain a thing that my Lord may cast it down as worthless?"

The Earl.—"It would be so, Winifred, stained by an unworthy action."

The Countess.—"Is it unworthy to save thy noble name from the taint of high treason? Let thy head, thy precious head, lie on the block at command of thy king, and if severed from thy body, evermore through future generations will history babble forth, the Earl of Nythsdale died upon the block a traitor! Who can undo the fact? And His Majesty—upon his soul will rest the guilt of shedding innocent, most innocent blood."

The Earl.—"Cease, Winifred, cease; thine arguments smack of man's subtle wisdom, and come not well from thy pure gentle lips."

The Countess.—"Then listen, husband, to a woman's plea, a wife, a mother. Thou knowest that without thee I am less than nothing!"

The Earl.—"Nay, thou hast a shrewd wit, and a discretion beyond most women."

The Countess.—"For thee, my Lord, I call forth my best parts. So dear is thy love to

me, so needful thy praise, I would be all things to please you. But oh! my most dear Lord, bethink you what I should be without thee. See me in thy mind's eye returning to our home, where I was so blest in thy company, alone, sorrowing, worse than widowed, violence having torn from me my heart—for thou art my heart! And as I raise, with infinite dolour and anguish, my sad eyes, there runneth to meet me our little prattlers, thine and mine. And they, most innocent, beseech of me news of him they most love and honour, when they shall see him? The time hath been so long since they did kiss his dear hand, and clomb up to stroke, with reverent loving little fingers, his fair curling beard, the which groweth to them so wondrously on the chin. And then, what shall I say? Good, my Lord, what words am I to use to tell thy children that their father, honoured and beloved, hath been attainted for

high treason; that he was imprisoned in the Tower; that the King hath had his head, that dear head with the fair curly beard, struck from his shoulders; that it hath been held aloft in sight of all the world, blasted with the words—‘Behold the head of a traitor!’”

The Earl.—“My Winifred, cease! I—thou oh!—wife—wife—wife!”

The Countess.—“And then our boy—will he not, noble and gallant, as ever boy of tender years may be—will he not strike his mother on the lips as she speaks the horrid words?”

The Earl.—“Wife—Winifred, hear me! Our boy hath so much of his mother’s nature in him, he will never utter the word traitor and his father’s name together. He is full young, but he is of full age in gallant bearing. The pretty noble fellow! I see him now, prattling so boldly of the knightly deeds he would achieve for the honour of his fair sisters.

At least, Winifred, you will tell him I died the death my king commanded."

The Countess.—"Not from me, oh! not from me will he hear aught. I am not stone—this heart is not adamant. It is breaking now, thank God! It is a foolish, gentle, tender heart—it can die, but it cannot suffer. Rude untutored lips will tell our children that their father was beheaded for disloyalty to his king, and that their mother died for shame of living his widow."

The Earl.—"Fie on thee, Winifred! There is a passion in thine eyes unseemly to me. We have but a few hours to be together, my wife. Here, rest thee on my heart, and calm this wild sobbing. Thou knowest thou must live for our children."

The Countess.—"I will not, because I cannot!"

The Earl.—"Nay, nay, sweetheart. Now, hear me patiently; wouldst thou counsel me to

desert my good Lord Derwentwater, and those attainted with us? We cast our fortunes together—we, the straight-locked friends of happier days. It hath happed that we are in evil case, it may be for the good of the realm that example should be made. But as in weal, so in woe, we are fellows. I must abide by my friends, Winifred.”

The Countess.—“Then thou lovest them better than thine own blood.”

The Earl.—“No, wife—mine honour only comes twixt thee and me.”

The Countess.—“Then bid honour be father and mother to thy babes; they will have none else.”

The Earl.—“They could have none better.”

The Countess.—“Oh! my good Lord, hear me plead but once more. It shall be on my knees, for so do I pray to my God in Heaven, who hath merciful, wide-open ears, and

answereth even before one speaketh, and I have now to beseech one who hath no pity upon those who look to him for all joy. When he made me his wife, he did swear that, forsaking all other, he would cleave only to me; and when God gave him children, he thanked Him, as having gifts from the Lord, for whose souls he was answerable. Yet doth honour come and say we are nothing—honour is before all! Well, be it so—I and my children will let this honour take the place that hath hitherto been ours only. But bethink thee, honour, if thou wilt gain much. There is a waywardness in the humours of the king that leads him to sport with life, as if it were a toy for him to give and take. And through this temper I and mine, and the noble name we bear, are to perish, as weeds are destroyed by the wayside; we are sacrificed for a prince who hath not mannerly words for a distracted wife.”

The Earl.—"Winifred!"

The Countess.—"Who recklessly smites down in fretful mood a noble life, and removes from the young and unprotected their lord and protector. A prince powerful for evil, but impotent for noble clemency. A prince who will not think death settleth the score between him and his victim, but will delight, as pastime, to scare and fright the widow and orphans."

The Earl.—"Wife!"

The Countess.—"Hunting us with such sad and ill-usage, that the cry of us will pierce heaven, and reach his ears, who so readily laid his head on the block at that prince's command."

The Earl.—"Go, Winifred—thou hast conquered. God forgive me mine infirmity."

The Countess.—"And God, my God! receive my thanks!"

The Earl (catching her as she falls faint-

ing).—"Sweetheart, my wife! Winifred! The joy hath killed her. She sobs—she breathes. If I err, O my God, in swerving from the path mine honour had marked out for me, I beseech Thee to assoil me, for the sake of her thou gavest me to love and cherish."

Finis.

Mrs. Spooner (crying heartily).—"Oh! my dear girls, I never could have forgiven you, had the Earl stood out. The most touching thing I ever heard! And did he escape?—and how was it done? Poor dear, darling wife! I must have beaten him had he not relented!"

Mrs. Joscelyn.—"I think that was an excellent idea of Kate's to faint. An intense overpowering joy loses its effect if portrayed; because it is almost impossible to keep it within sufficiently rational bounds so as not to border on the ludicrous. So with a great grief, which is so sublime endured in silence, so painful in all its phases if outspoken."

Clara.—"There is this to be said of joy, that it is generally born in a moment, it flashes like a meteor in the darkest hours; while the eyes are full of tears, it blinds them with the splendour of its radiance, so that naturally the frame faints with the sudden ecstasy of relief."

Mrs. Joscelyn.—"Very true. Let me compliment you on the due appreciation you have shown of two such noble characters, each so different of their kind."

Bessie.—"Do—do let us have some more, it was so short!"

Kate.—"We have another nearly ready, but we shall require your help, Bessie."

Bessie.—"Oh! how delightful! I hope it is Cinderella, and that I am to have a real godmother."

Kate.—"Ah! ah! Bessie; you want a coach, do you?—footmen and horses, to drive round the island? But if your godmother comes, I wish you would ask her to furnish us with

some dresses. It is inconceivable the trouble we had to improvise the Earl's dress, when there was not a male garment on the island."

Mrs. Joscelyn.—"You did very well; now, what is your next scene?"

Clara.—"Fancy the ridiculousness of my little gossip. She wanted to act something so wholly different from the Earl and Countess of Nythsdale, that she chose Socrates and Xantippe."

Mrs. Spooner's eyes asking (what her tongue prudently forbore) the history of these two worthies, Clara went on just as if she had always intended to say it, with—

"He, you know, so wise, so learned, so honoured a sage in ancient history, who was supposed to have lived in the time of Ezra the prophet, or Artaxerxes the King; and she, the greatest scold ever known, from then until now; whose temper has dignified her with a proverb. But as I said to Kate, considering the character of Socrates, it would be but

justice to it to keep him wholly silent."

"And then," interrupted Kate, "we did not know how people scolded in ancient days; though I daresay Socrates was provoking at times, spite of all his wisdom. I have known one or two very wise people; one was Mr. Fresnot, and he was never in time for anything——"

"And oh! I know one," interrupted Mrs. Spooner, quite joyful at being able to have a little fling at learning; "Mrs. Homespın, who never had a worse name, for she is never at home; and not only cannot spin, but is unable to sew. She despises work; her house is all over ink, and she never attends to a single thing in it. Her poor husband—however, he has taken to drinking——"

"What is your next entertainment?" interrupted Mrs. Joscelyn, who knew the penalty of giving Mrs. Spooner a license to lash her neighbours.

Clara.—"The Exiles of Siberia.' You are to suppose that Elizabeth has already entreated her parents to permit her to take her memorable journey, and that they have refused. She is suffering in consequence, so that her father and mother are secretly anxious about her. I am to be Stanislaus; Bessie, on a high chair, elaborately got up for the occasion, will be Queen; and Kate is to be the heroine herself."

"Bessie, I presume, has not much to say."

"Oh! mamma, why? I feel brimful of 'says.'"

"You shall not be silent, I promise you, Bessie. Now, please to allow us ten minutes for preparation."

When the screen was drawn aside, the appearance of the Queen, knowing who represented her, was really startling. To suppose that the round, rosy-faced Bessie had been changed into a dignified, pale, mourning Queen,

was almost too much for Mrs. Joscelyn's risible faculties, much as she desired to be grave. It ought to be recorded of the newly-made Queen, that she abated not one jot of her dignity and reserve, though she overheard the exclamations of the audience.

Stanislaus leant against and behind her chair, which was a convenient situation, as the petticoats he was obliged to wear could not be seen.

Stanislaus.—"Have you seen our child?"

The Queen.—"But a moment, Stanislaus—she shuns our sight."

Stanislaus.—"It is that we may not see her weep."

The Queen.—"She comes; I hear her step on the snow, so light, yet without the spring, the elasticity of youth!"

(Enter Elizabeth slowly, her eyes cast down. Seeing her father, she starts, and kneels at his feet as if for his blessing.)

Stanislaus.—"Daughter, you have been weeping."

Elizabeth.—"Father, my heart is heavy; I am weary."

Stanislaus.—"Child, you mourn secretly. Is it so great a trial to be bidden not to leave your father and mother?"

Elizabeth.—"That is my only consolation."

Stanislaus.—"Yet, day by day, you grow more sad."

Elizabeth.—"It is sad to have no purpose for which to live."

Stanislaus.—"Is it not enough that thou art the light, the sunshine of our hearts?"

Elizabeth.—"Yes, I feel it so much, that I would repay the debt. My father gave me life, I would give him what is the worth of life—freedom."

Stanislaus.—"You give us happiness. Be content. Alas! for freedom! Is thy nature God-like, that thou canst give what to mortals is impossible?"

Elizabeth.—"To a child God gives His nature. Man deprived thee of freedom; what man has dared to do, I, thy child and God's, would dare to undo!"

Stanislaus.—"Should you fail?"

Elizabeth.—"Fail! why fail? For what purpose was I born? Only to bloom like the flowers who bend forward to greet the hand that caresses them, and, being plucked, die happy that they have fulfilled their destiny? I should die so if I might fulfil mine."

Stanislaus.—"And your mother and I left tasting sorrow now in its bitterest cup, because we have lost that for which alone we cared to live."

Elizabeth.—"But I shall succeed, father."

Stanislaus.—"Oh! Elizabeth, matchless is thy love; but you have gazed, my daughter, into the realms of fancy, until thy judgment is clouded. Hear thy mother, it may be she can touch some sympathetic cord in thy heart,

by which thou mayest see thy way to the realities of our life."

Elizabeth.—"Mother, I listen."

The Queen (faltering).—"I am a woman. Oh! Stanislaus, I can endure. Our Elizabeth assumes to me a divine aspect when I see her—absent, I remember I am her mother, and fear."

Stanislaus.—"In other words, your heart responds to her heart—you encourage secretly her project."

The Queen.—"Ah, husband, if she should succeed, you will be free! Happy thought! ask me not to protest against a deed so holy."

Stanislaus.—"Hear me. Dost thou not perceive that to free the husband thou sacrifice the child? What! silent! What! no shudder? Our only child, our sole possession, our one blessing; bereft of all others, but that thou and I art together. Shall she be sacri-

ficed for the vain hope of giving a few days' freedom to a worn-out dying prisoner?"

The Queen.—"Stanislaus, she dies either way. I am her mother. I shall mourn for my child less, if she fall a victim to her filial devotion, than if she droops here into a grave of disappointed hope!"

Stanislaus.—"Thou hast lost thy woman's nature, and rememberest only that thou wast a queen."

The Queen.—"I remember that I am thy wife, and that I bore thee a child, whom the great God has elected as an example to all ages of filial devotion. My Elizabeth will be immortalised."

Stanislaus (rising and holding up both hands).—"Daughter, take my blessing, and the blessing of God Almighty be with you. Go!"

(*Elizabeth kneels at her father's feet and kisses his hands.*)

“Very well done, Bessie,” said Mrs. Joscelyn. “I am quite proud of you!”

“Oh!” blushed Bessie, “Clara wrote out what I was to say.”

“Well, it was very pretty, I must say, though I don’t think I was so much moved as with the first one. Really, how clever they are, Mrs. Joscelyn! But, Kate, you did not make Elizabeth joyful enough.”

“That was my advice,” said Clara; “the strongest feelings are generally least displayed. Elizabeth has shown her disappointment by silent suffering, and she now rejoiced with silent ecstasy. The strength of her character was so great, as well as the power of her affections, that there could be no doubt of her joy. Also her father was a king. The royal daughter did not forget the reticence that belongs to royalty.”

“Oh! don’t bother me any more with your fine ideas!” said Mrs. Spooner. “I know nothing about royal doings—or men’s doings, indeed!”

“And yet Pope, in giving us the only praise he can, says we owe it to a mixture of the manly character.

‘And yet believe me, good as well as ill,
Woman’s at best a contradiction still—
Heaven, when it strives to polish all it can,
Its last best work but makes a softer man.’”

“How unjust, Mrs. Joscelyn! Why don’t you tell that Pope, the next time you see him, that there never was anything so untrue!”

“There is one thing that has struck me as very strange,” answered Mrs. Joscelyn, quickly, “and that is, how this little wilful wild Kate should be enabled to act such tender scenes. I thought all her talents lay in the gleeful line.”

“Which is so nice!” exclaimed Bessie—“I love to be merry and mischievous.”

“Miss Bessie!” exclaimed one or two.

“I cannot help it,” pleaded Bessie—“I am just like pa.”

Mrs. Joscelyn could not help laughing, and they tried to extract from Bessie her definition of mischief, as caught from the Squire. Meantime, Clara was teasing her gossip.

“I own you surprised me, for, as your aunt says, I fancied lively matters would suit you best. Do you know, I think it must be all owing to the Arctic regions?”

“*Et tu, Brute?*” was the answer.

Which was considered unanswerable.

Thus did our Ladies spend their time. If they were not very wise—if they laughed at little things—if they were easily amused, and spent their evenings like children, at least it was all very innocent.

“Ah! wretched, and too solitary she,
Who loves not her own company,”

was their motto.

Fortunately they had very fine weather, and in addition to catering for the evening’s amuse-

ment, they employed a good deal of their time in trying to make a garden.

The old herring man had brought them some implements, and they had ordered seeds and roots to come by the boat on the following Tuesday. They had plenty to do in making walks, forming rockeries, and transplanting ferns. There could be nothing very lively in their lives, for there was no great two-funnelled "Cannibal" to excite their interest; they were accustomed to the visits of the herring man, and it pleased Mrs. Spooner to be in an excellent and unexcitable humour.

Thus the days went by so calmly and smoothly, they hardly knew how time was going; and it must be confessed that even Mrs. Joscelyn felt the effects of their quiet life, and was in that dosy comfortable state out of which it is so difficult to rouse oneself. So the second Sunday came round, and as they arrayed themselves in their silk dresses and bonnets, they gave a few

sighs to the remembrance of the preceding Sunday, now separated from this one in their memories by a very sad space.

The boatmen came at nine as before, and providing themselves with tablets to write down some of the inscriptions on the tombstones, and luncheon, they once more left Luff to take care of itself, and took boat for Exe church.

CHAPTER V.

PUFF! PUFF!

SUSAN'S information about the gentlemen was not quite true. The boat was ordered to come every other day to Puff, so delightful was the sensation of seeing it arrive on the Monday week of their sojourn on the island.

And, indeed, they had reason to welcome it.

Their provisions all gone, the hospitable "Cannibal" in the act of steaming away, they were absolutely nervous as to the fear of starvation. When the Squire shouted out the fact that the boat was on its way, they all rushed down to meet it.

One asked impatiently for the letters and newspapers, another for any news, a third was curious as to what provisions had come, and, it was evident to the boatmen, that, whether the gentlemen were tired of Puff or not, they greeted them very much as if they were so.

Their excitement being a little cooled down, the Squire was enabled to express his gratification at a basket of provisions sent from Deep-Cliffs, that was really delightful to behold. It seemed as if the housekeeper had been inspired, just to send her master those delicacies that he most affected.

A home-made *paté*, the receipt for which shall be handsomely presented to the public and my dear reader gratis, was reposing between a ham ready dressed and a beautiful piece of pressed beef. The half of a Stilton cheese, a quantity of fresh eggs, and a bottle of cream, were among the contents of the basket.

The Squire longed to begin his breakfast over again.

It was the sight of the cream that first suggested the idea of having the boat over every other day. They found, did our fine gentlemen, that, insupportable as life was without leave to smoke, it was even more wretched deprived of cream.

“By-the-bye, Frank,” remarked King Crab, as they were settling what should be for dinner, and gloating over all their gastronomic treasures, “where is the sirloin of beef on which we were to have dined yesterday?”

“Where, indeed!” answered Frank, “it is these extraordinary Puff rats. That piece of beef has been eaten by them, bones and all.”

“Now, that is too bad! What on earth were those lazy idiots about that they did not look after it?”

“I hoped they had eaten it, but Sam de-

clares his Sunday feasting consisted of nothing but bread and cheese."

"Sam is the greatest——"

"Or Scruttles the greatest—thief," interrupted Frank.

"Now, Summers, how can you say so? What good can it do that poor fellow to steal anything here?"

"Of whom are you speaking?" interposed the Squire.

He was told.

"Humph! that accounts, I think, for a remarkable bundle I saw Scruttles give one of the boatmen. I was curious to know whom it was for, and was rather pleased to find out that that old friend of yours, Crab, is really his mother. Said he to the boatman, 'Please let my old mother hev my duds for washin' and bring 'em back.' I also remarked what an astonishing bundle it was, considering Scruttles has never changed a single garment

that I can discover since he has been here."

"Go on, Squire—yes, go on. Take away the poor fellow's character, just as I have given him a chance to recover it."

"I do not desire to do so, by any means. God forbid that I should take away any man's character, provided he has got one, which I do not think—however, I beg your pardon, Crab; I will say no more."

"You have said quite enough," was the grumpy answer.

That evening, looking carefully round to see that their king was not in sight, the Squire confided the rest of his secret opinion regarding Scruttles to Spooner and Frank, being of that disposition, that, if he had an idea on any subject, he must deliver himself of it somehow.

"My opinion is that he stole the beef," he remarked as *sotto voce* as he could.

"My opinion, also," said Spooner.

"I know it," added Frank; "for I saw him do it."

"Why in the world did you not say so, Frank?"

"Where was the good? Crabshawe will fight the whole of us sooner than give up his beloved convict. He is a regular thief. Don't you see that I always lock the doors of your rooms when we leave the house at any time?"

"And I wanted to do the man some good! I gave him five shillings, Frank."

"Did you, Squire? It certainly was the only way to his heart."

"But what are we to do?" exclaimed Spooner; "now that the boat is coming so often, he will steal everything."

"Oh! leave me to settle that matter. I don't think he will venture to send any more bundles to his dear mamma, after a little hint I shall give him."

Truly it was a hint.

Just as Scruttles placed upon the dinner-table a tureen of soup, all the gentlemen being seated ready to dine, and more than ready, because they had had no luncheon, Frank said in his coolest manner,

“Scruttles, the next time you send a bundle to your mother, I must take the liberty of seeing whether, by accident, you have not got amongst yours some of my pocket-handchiefs. I have told the boatman to open it, or leave it behind.”

Scruttles made a hideous grimace, as he answered, in a most abject manner,

“Certingly, sir; but I mostly thinks has mother ’ool send me a change, vich is hall I wants, sir, Mr. Summers, axing your parding, sir.”

“I am glad you have a change,” remarked Sir George.

“Ho, yes, Sir Folly, axing yer parding, I ’ave a change, thank you, Sir Folly.”

As for the Squire, all his interest in the "excellent convict" was gone. His five shillings had been thrown away. Not that he regretted them, he simply had a rooted repugnance to a thief and a liar. He would rather Scruttles had knocked him down—*infra dig.* though it was. He hated the sight of him.

Fortunately the weather was beautifully fine, and they were out deep-sea fishing from morning until night. Once or twice they went within a few hundred yards of Luff. On one occasion they were startled (shall we say entranced?) by hearing bursts of silvery laughter coming pealing over the water, straight into their boat.

As long as their cooked provisions lasted they fared well—at least, in comparison with the week before.

And now the dawn of the second Sunday broke upon the Puffites. They decided to go to church.

The Squire came down to breakfast, dressed,

for the second time since he had been on the island, as a gentleman. The consciousness of looking well, of his clothes fitting faultlessly, of his general appearance being remarkably pleasant, is as agreeable to the feelings of the male species as any amount of finery to the vainest woman living.

The Squire was in high good-humour with himself, and he showed it. He ate an excellent breakfast—a feat he excelled in, but this morning he outdid himself. His place at the breakfast-table presented quite an array of *débris*.

After breakfast was over, he became very impatient to go to church, and walked about with his hat in his hand and a large prayer-book under his arm, in a manner that must have been most edifying to his companions.

Mr. Spooner was (we are happy to record this as it will please his Arabella) a little indif-

ferent about his dress, the boat, and the going to church. He parted his hair on one side in an absent mood, and he consulted both whiskers as to the effect. They were in a state as indifferent as himself, and considered it scarcely worth his while to alter it.

Had we been consulted, we should have said,

“By all means keep it parted on one side, and don’t ever do it otherwise again.”

It was much more becoming.

“I shall not see Arabella,” soliloquised this excellent young husband, “so it does not much signify. But I must see Grimston ; though it is Sunday, I must get Grimston to let me have some tobacco. If I go in at the private door, I daresay he will give me leave to hunt the shop for some of the real sort. I need not pay him then, so it won’t look like selling.”

Having settled this matter with his conscience, Mr. Spooner made his appearance at breakfast, looking very spruce. Sir George instantly detected the change in the style of doing his hair, and pronounced upon it, as fervently as one young lady might tell another, "that she looked a love."

Captain Crabshawe announced his intention of not going to church.

"Why it was necessary to go to church to say one's prayers, was enough to puzzle the brains of an elephant."

It is supposed that Captain Crabshawe thought that brains are doled out to men and animals according to their sizes, without reference to the amount of sense developed.

Just as they were shoving off, he changed his mind, and, muttering his intention of going to his lodgings to get another coat (an intention warmly greeted by his companions), he took his place among them. Sam was already

seated in the bow of the boat, as elaborately dressed as his master.

The Squire, greatly against the grain, as it was his endeavour to ignore Scruttles as much as possible, yet thought it his duty to give him the option of attending to the welfare of his soul, if he wished it. King Crab scouting the notion, Scruttles solemnly agreed with him.

"I knows noffin' about souls—axing yer parding, sir."

"It is time you should," remarked Frank, who, having more to do with the "excellent convict" than any of the others, took the liberty of giving him advice and reprimand *ad lib.* "But take care you attend to the dinner, for if it is not ready against our return at half-past six o'clock, not one ounce shall you have to eat for two days."

Scruttles grinned like a gorilla, and then bid the departing boat adieu, with a gambol that might have been copied from a lively camel.

Notwithstanding the Squire's pious care not to go without his prayer-book, he certainly had not got it with him.

"That is because Elizabeth is not here," grumbled he, after routing out everyone in the boat to find it. "I remember now I put it down on the bench when I lit my cigar."

For though they were going to church, there they all were, puffing away at the pipes of independence, as they floated over the water.

Now, if my readers suppose that these five gentlemen are speeding away to church, influenced by the properest feelings of piety and godliness, they think better of them than they deserve.

They did all go to church; the sweet chimes of the church bells having an effect even upon Captain Crabshawe. And our good Squire was certainly in earnest. He never could do two things at once. If he went to church, he went to say his prayers, and he said them with all

his heart. His responses were as loud as the clerk's, and he sang the hymns and the psalms with a vigour and power that led one to suppose he was a patent harmonium, or doing duty for one. But in truth the Squire at church was a goodly sight. Men looked at him, and women too, and as they looked, gathered their straying thoughts together, and essayed to pray as fervently.

Frank Summers, too, remembered "the hour and the place." He never entered a church without thinking of his gentle, good mother, now a saint in heaven, whose tender eyes did not flash with so much joy at hearing of the honours he gained at school or college, as when he told her of the high thoughts burning within him—thoughts of God and eternity that made the loving mother feel she and her son, with God's blessing, might spend that eternity together. Yet did his thoughts stray a little—his eyes, following his thoughts, fell upon a cer-

tain pew. It was now empty, but how often had he gazed on a face and form within that pew, which—well, he would think no more of it; but if anyone had looked at him at that moment, they would have seen a flush upon his cheek—a glowing light in his eyes. Frank says his prayers more fervently than ever, as if he had need to express gratitude of a peculiar kind to the Almighty giver of all good.

As for Mr. Spooner, his thoughts wandered in so perplexing a manner, we can hardly follow them. He was scarcely seated in his pew, when he saw immediately before him a bonnet—almost the facsimile of the last bonnet in which he had seen his Arabella. He was quite nervous for the moment—could it be she? But only for a moment, for an accidental turning of the head, disclosing the profile of an elderly, red-nosed, undeniable spinster, roused his indignation.

“What business had an old, an ugly woman,

to wear a bonnet like his Arabella's? He should make a point of requesting Arabella to put her bonnet on the fire when he saw her next. He could not permit his wife to wear the same sort of bonnet as Miss Smash—certainly not!"

His eyes wandering at this moment, caught sight of Grimston. He was glad to see Grimston at church. A man who performed his religious duties well would be sure to give him good tobacco. Surely there was another bonnet—was Arabella really in the church after all? His neighbours right and left were disturbed by Mr. Spooner's efforts to see the face encircled in this bonnet. He was soon convinced it was not his Arabella—a shower of golden ringlets came from beneath it; anon he saw the face.

This time he was not so indignant, for the face was a very pretty one. Perhaps he would permit Arabella to keep her bonnet. A vague sort of sadness took possession of him as he

reproved himself for endeavouring to catch another glimpse of the pretty face. What was the greatest beauty in the world now to him?

Before he could answer himself, right into his ear came the words—"Thou art the man." He was struck as it were with remorse, and remembered that he had come to church for a very different purpose from that which now occupied him. He therefore blew his nose by way of collecting his scattered thoughts, consulted his left whisker, and was tolerably attentive for some time, when suddenly he caught sight of the bald head and purple visage of Mr. Muggs, the proprietor of the best hotel in Rampton.

"There's Muggs at church; I have a mind, before we return to Puff, to get Muggs to let me have a hot lunch in his private parlour. We have not had a decent thing to eat since we have been there."

His thoughts were now divided between his religious duties and what he would order for

luncheon; and we are afraid the latter predominated over the former.

As for Sir George, it must be owned he attended church more from a decent habit of propriety than for any good he got by it. He was of that station in society that he was elevated on a little hillock above his fellow-men; so that what he did, and what he did not, were more before the eyes of the world than aught pertaining to them. In deference to the expressed opinion of the world, that it was the proper thing to do, to go to church two or three times a month, he showed himself in his ancestral pew. It was his general habit, on first seating himself therein, to consider how many people would be gratified by seeing him at church. Having satisfied himself that these were not a few, he would begin to scan his fellow-worshippers all over the church, and settle in his own mind who was the prettiest woman in it. Before very long, on this parti-

cular Sunday, he had come to the conclusion there was not a decent woman among the whole female congregation. Far be it from us to insinuate that he was stigmatising them as "no better than they should be;" a phrase indicative of an awful state of things, yet miserably obscure, grammatically analysed. No, he only meant personally, Taken personally, there was not a pretty woman in the church.

"Perhaps," he thought, "I miss Miss Daintree; certainly there is no one to equal her. The man she marries will have—"

"Thou art the man!" smote upon his ear. He was startled, and began, for the first time, to pay attention to his religious duties. He felt an unusual degree of softness in his heart.

Miss Daintree rose before his mental vision, clothed in angelic perfections. These seemed to increase into full-blown loveliness, when he thought of the famous Admiral's encomiums,

and the positive outspoken admiration of his friend, Colonel Erne. True, one was a sailor—sailors were proverbially enthusiastic upon every pretty face they saw. Still, Miss Daintree was more than a pretty girl; she had sense, and wit, and a thousand sweetnesses. Also, amid all her girlish liveliness, there was a certain dignity, or self-respect in her character, that pleased him more than anything. He was a male flirt, he acknowledged it. He liked to go to the extremest verge of flirtation with a girl, and then draw back. He had something in his nature of the characteristics of the spider. He loved to sport with his victims. His heart smote him as he thought of the laceration one or two hearts had suffered through this love of sport.

Now, much as he had endeavoured to lacerate the heart of Miss Daintree, she had never permitted him to see that he could wound her at all. She was merry and lively when he

devoted himself to her; and she was merry and lively when he devoted himself to some other girl, before her very face!

This he unconsciously admired in her, though all the time he kept assuring himself that he would make her love him, before he finally brought himself to the culminating point of asking her to become Lady Follett. For, that she was eventually to be so was the end of all his thoughts on the subject, even when provoked and irritated by the unnecessary advice of Captain Crabshawe. Now, as said before, his heart unusually softened, he came to the conclusion she was the more to be beloved because her maiden dignity would always prevent her showing her love until assured of his—*ergo*, he would propose to her the first favourable opportunity after the challenge was over. He would allow no more Crimean heroes to go hovering about her, and staring at her beauty. The future Lady Follett belonged to him and

him only. He grew impatient to proclaim the right. A whole fortnight more of misery, ennui, starvation !

As he thought this, his eyes chanced to fall on the rubicund visage of Mr. Muggs, on whose bald pate a sunbeam, with the help of a ray from a painted window, was enacting all sorts of phosphoric gambols.

“Muggs at church ! Muggs has a good cook—his veal cutlets are excellent ! I think I shall order myself a dinner at Muggs’s. Everything at Puff seems, with all Frank’s care, to be messed by that dirty beast Scruttles. I have no appetite there. Ah ! there is Sam—how melancholy and wretched he looks since he has been at Puff ! I shall tell Sam to go and get a good blow-out, too, wherever he likes.”

So much for the manner in which Sir George Follett attended to his religious duties.

As for Captain Crabshawe, the estimation in which he was held by the bulk of mankind, or rather the circle in which he lived, was not such as to make it a matter of a moment's thought what he did with himself on Sundays or other days. Consequently, not having a character to keep up like Sir George, he only went to church when it pleased him, and that was very seldom.

In fact, going to church made him nervous. He had the feelings of a man who knows that there is a writ out against him, and that he may be tapped on the shoulder any minute, and have it served on him.

Thus, when the clergyman pronounced so emphatically, "Thou art the man," he could not help glancing behind him. He wished he were near the door, that he might creep out unobserved. How he came to church he did not know, for close, confined places always disagreed with him. He felt twinges of rheu-

matism all over him, besides a slight giddiness. Perhaps he had smoked more than was good for him.

Ah! there was Muggs, his bald head shining out like the knob of a well-polished umbrella handle. He would adjourn to Muggs's, and have a couple of glasses of stiff brandy and water—that would brighten him up a bit, and take away his nervousness. And if Muggs had a round of beef in cut, he would go in for a plateful or so, with mashed potatoes—a delicacy he much delighted in, and which it had been found impossible to make at Puff.

The rest of the Captain's thoughts are not worth recording.

The service was over. Our five gentlemen gathered together from their different pews into one focus—the door; but, strange to say, when the Squire looked round for them, after greeting a few of his Rampton acquaintances,

no one was near him but Frank. The others had unaccountably disappeared.

So, arm-in-arm, the two friends paraded up and down a short time.

"What a doleful thing a town is on a Sunday, Frank!"

"It is, Squire. Let us go down to the pier."

"Why, Puff is more lively."

"Certainly, Squire," responded the amiable Frank.

They took some turns up and down the pier.

"What can have become of all the people?" exclaimed the Squire, as they discovered they had this usual promenade all to themselves.

"Everybody is at luncheon, I suppose," answered Frank.

"By-the-bye, that is a capital idea! Let us go, Frank, to Muggs's, and have a good

luncheon. No offence to you, my dear fellow, who have, I am sure, done your best; but I have a longing to eat something nicely-dressed."

"A most reasonable longing. Why should we not dine here, instead of going Home?"

"Capital! where are the others? Do let us seek for them and propose it," exclaimed the Squire, wholly unconscious of the ironical stress that Frank laid upon the word "home." He required all things to be plainly developed to his understanding, and saw nothing in Frank's words but an uncommonly sensible idea.

"Or let us go at once to Muggs's and order the dinner; and we will not tell them, Frank, until it is ready—it will be such an agreeable surprise!"

"We must treat them to it, Squire, or it will be by no means agreeable to King Crab. In fact, his pleasure in eating it will be lost in the pang of paying for it."

“By jove! you are right, Frank; that is even more sensible than the first idea. Crab comes of a thrifty family; which is, I believe, a great virtue, but I cannot say that the Joscelyns ever practised it. Between you and me, Frank, I am no hand at hoarding; I like that command in the Bible, where we are bidden not to let the left hand know what the right gives—but hullo! there’s Muggs off somewhere! Muggs! Muggs!”

As for Mr. Muggs pretending not to hear the Squire’s call, that was impossible! Even the suburbs of Rampton might have heard the summons.

He obeyed the Squire at once, who rushed immediately into the delightful excitement of ordering a first-rate dinner, wholly oblivious of a curious display of dissolving expressions on the rosy face of Mr. Muggs, that came and went with marvellous rapidity.

“Dinner for five—a guinea a-head, iced

champagne, every delicacy you can think of—but rabbits and flounders.”

“Or herrings,” suggested Frank.

“Or herrings,” echoed the Squire; “I don’t care if I never see another herring all my life; but what is the matter, Muggs?”

“I have already orders for three dinners, Squire; and when you called ‘me, I was just about running to Shanks for a delicate veal cutlet for Sir George. I know Shanks killed a veal on Friday, and though it is the Sabbath, I feel sure he will oblige me with some.”

“Three dinners !”

“Yes, Squire, Mr. Spooner came first, and ordered a rump-steak, sir, with a shalot or two; a greengage tart, with Devonshire cream; Stilton cheese, a salad, a pint of hock. Sir George, mulligitawny soup, a sole filleted, veal cutlets, a duckling, green peas, an orange marmalade soufflé, bottle of Burgundy; Sam

to have the run of his teeth—so Sir George expressed it, Squire. The Captain, sir, he has ordered two plates of cold biled, mashed potatoes, and a jam puff. The drink not settled.”

“Do they all dine together?”

“Oh! no, Mr. Summers; they not only don’t dine together, but have each a separate apartment. The Captain—he, sir, dines in the bar, sir!”

The Squire was silent from astonishment. His bewildered thoughts wandered through the mazes of thought, engendered by the curious habits and idiosyncrasies of the human species. He felt as if his mind had experienced a rude blow, which he longed to return in the flesh.

He recovered himself sufficiently to echo Frank’s order.

“Put all the dinners together in one room, on one table. They shall have their own and our dinners too, and, Squire, we will pay for all.”

"It will be a lesson, Frank," murmured he, as they departed to kill the time until the dinner hour. The Squire seldom moralised; when he did, it was so great an effort, that he felt quite sleepy after it. So he laid himself down under a tree and fell fast asleep; but before he had quite composed himself, he imparted to Frank the pith of his moralising:

"I don't think a woman would have done it, Frank!"

"Of course not, Squire."

While this worthy gentleman slept himself into his usual normal state of happy content, Frank bethought him of the discomfiture that would ensue, did their intended guests meet suddenly the shock of an exposure.

His ideas of an entertainment consisted in its being enjoyed both mentally and physically. He was not going to give so much money for a feast, if this feast was to disagree with the guests through discomposure of mind, than

which nothing so interferes with a perfect digestion. No sting of remorse should embitter the first gulp of champagne, no twinge of conscience interfere with the enjoyment of discussing an excellent and well-appointed dinner.

How was this to be managed?

Frank was well aware that, among his companions, he passed for a man of easy good-nature; nay, when it suited them, they made prodigious use of that good-nature, even going so far as to consider him, in the matter of being imposed upon very often, as closely allied to the numerous family of the Fools.

This appreciation of his merits was so far beneficial to him, that they confided in him, as a man confides in his valet. They did not care to appear in his eyes as heroes; on the contrary, they were upon the comfortable terms of being under no restraint before or with him. Their weaknesses, their little sins and

follies, were as patent to his sight as their own. Indeed, rather more so, if we are to believe "Burns."

But with the Squire it was very different. There was a bluntness about him, a disregard of agreeable subterfuge, a plainness of speech, joined to an utter incapability of fibbing, or even compromising, that made him an object of dread to the dealer in trifling hypocrisy. No lie, however cheerful in aspect, went down with him. He seemed indeed to take especial pleasure in examining its showy dress, and stripping it naked to view. Without being remarkable for a great share of wisdom, he had an instinct for the truth, that made him detect the least departure therefrom, with a sagacity almost miraculous. Thus Frank knew that their three friends would bear with fortitude, or rather they would not care at all, that he should know of their three private dinners; but with Squire Joscelyn, the

knowledge would be attended with such dismay, such dread of his turbulent tongue, his ungovernable truth, that they never would recover it. The dinner would be an entire failure.

So he set off in search of his friends, trusting to inspiration to arrange the matter. He met Mr. Spooner alone, who did not appear so well pleased to see his Puff brother as might be expected. In fact, he was hurrying to Muggs, on his own little private business.

“Spooner,” said Frank, linking his arm inexorably in his, “you are just the person I wish to see. The Squire, inspired by a happy thought, has ordered a first-rate dinner for us all at Muggs’s, and I give the wine.”

“At Muggs’s?”

“Yes, I have been there, and finding that you had ordered your luncheon, I thought you would forgive me for unordering it, as

the Squire will be disappointed if you do not do justice to his feast."

Now Spooner at once felt an inward conviction that Frank knew all about his private little arrangement, and he was honestly ashamed; moreover, he confessed it. Frank soothed him over with a few more doses of polite fibbing, and it ended in Mr. Spooner's experiencing that lightness of heart which is the consequence of easing one's conscience of a load, and he gave himself over to the delights of happy anticipation.

To do Spooner justice, nothing but an absolute craving for something palatable to eat, made him at all put up with the disagreeableness of what he called "feeding alone." Frank told him where to find the Squire, and they separated.

Summers found Sir George reading the newspaper in the coffee-room, and feeling no need, in his case, to resort to any soother-

ing, or polite fibbing, he said at once—

“The Squire joins with me, in giving you a dinner to-day at Muggs’s, instead of going home.”

“But I have ordered mine already!” answered Sir George; “mulligi——”

“Tawny soup, veal cutlets, duckling, peas, orange something. I ordered your dinner to be put with ours, George, I thought it looked better.”

“Certainly, Frank, you did quite right; I had no idea any of you cared to dine on shore, otherwise I would have proposed it before.”

“I have no doubt of it,” answered Frank.

Thus he had managed two of his intended guests; one sensitive, and the other totally ignorant of having done anything but what was most natural.

King Crab was to be treated after a very different fashion.

"The Squire has ordered Muggs to provide us with a first-rate dinner, and has sent me to invite you."

"Anything to pay?"

"No."

"I accept with pleasure. Between you and me, Summers, the Squire loves his stomach, and I don't see why we should not take advantage thereof."

"He loves a good dinner, but he does not like to eat it alone. He could not enjoy a plate of cold beef and mashed potatoes by himself."

The Captain winced a little, just as a rhinoceros might, at the pinge of a bullet against his rough hide. But he showed no other symptom of having a conscience, and shortly left Frank, who knew he did so to go and unorder the plate of cold "biled."

When they all met to eat this famous dinner, the good Squire was the only one

who felt a little uneasy. He wished them all to enjoy themselves, but he also desired that they should feel he was hurt. He wanted them to sit down in an hilarious mood, yet he longed to fling at their heads a few of the hard stones of truth.

His feelings as a gentleman urged him to treat his guests courteously, but his wrongs as a man and a brother goaded him to take revenge. But his mind was completely thrown off its balance by finding them as gay and unconcerned as if they had never perpetrated, even in thought, an act contrary to the rules of good-fellowship.

He began to think that Muggs had made a mistake, and his good heart rejoiced. With the first bumper of champagne he dismissed all bitterness of mind, and they ate and drank jovially.

It was not until dinner was over, and they were all in that complacent mood that follows

a special good time, that Frank, with much innocence of manner, propounded the question as to whether they had not infringed upon the stringent rules of the challenge, and forfeited their right to win by dining on shore.

The Squire was so shocked at the bare supposition of having broken a rule, or his word, that he was wholly unable to speak.

Mr. Spooner reddened to the roots of his hair, and clutched a whisker so vehemently, that, between pain and surprise, he exclaimed, as any woman might,

“Goodness gracious!”

Sir George smiled. Secretly he thought, “If we have infringed the challenge, of course it is over.” A vision of a lovely blushing face, half visible through a magnificent veil of Brussels lace, his own particular present, standing beside him at an altar, filled him with the most delightful sensation. He was

lost in the mental contemplation of a bridal scene.

King Crab, invigorated by champagne, loudly declared the ladies had no business to interfere with their little pleasure.

After a great deal of discussion, in which Sir George's was the only dissentient voice, I grieve to say that the gentlemen settled among themselves not to mention the episode of dining on shore.

"Unless," stipulated the Squire, "Elizabeth asks me the question point-blank."

They all agreed with the Squire that, if Mrs. Joscelyn did propound the question, the Squire must answer it truthfully.

"Women," remarked King Crab, "as a general rule, uniformly ask just what they ought to know nothing about; but, as regarded Mrs. Joscelyn, he must do her the justice to say she was less likely to do so than the rest of her sex."

The Squire acknowledged this compliment to his wife with a nod, which, whether it was meant to express gratitude or reciprocity of sentiment, was accepted by the Captain with much urbanity.

Thus, upon the whole, they passed their Sunday much to their satisfaction; as regarded their religious duties, they were not without hope that they had fulfilled them in an exemplary manner; and with respect to the duty they owed themselves, nothing could be more gratifying than the way in which it had been performed.

It was about nine o'clock when they started for Home, as Frank repeated at every opportunity with emphasis. The moon had not yet risen, but worlds of stars were twinkling their little lights, as if rejoicing that she was on her way.

Delicious as it is at all times to float upon the water (that is, if one's digestion does not

take umbrage at the motion), at no time is it more so than at night. The beauty of the heavens is twofold—it is reflected upon the sea, until one of a fervid imagination might almost fancy he was sailing through the blue vault of heaven, towards the lands of the blest. To be sure, the landing at Puff might dispel the illusion. But, at present, those who were awake gave themselves up to the contemplation of the loveliness and beauty of the night.

There was a luminous shimmer on the sea that gave it the appearance of liquid silver. There was a purity and balm in the air that refreshed them like the waters of Nepenthe. There was a silence, yet a melody, in the sea, to which the gentle sound of the plashing oars kept time, that soothed them as a happy dream.

Sir George took the opportunity of completing his mental picture of that intended

bridal-day, until he had worked himself up into such a state of fervour on the subject, his heart bounded and throbbed with an emotion as delicious as it was novel.

Mr. Spooner composed an ode, which will be found in the journal. It was his happiest effort, and he mused over and repeated it to himself, until he experienced quite a glow of gratified vanity.

Frank's face, if it was the index of his mind, faintly visible every now and then through the ray of a star lighting it up, might lead one to suppose that some beneficent being had crowned him with an especial happiness that was seldom bestowed upon mortals, a happiness that is felt but cannot be expressed. Mortal pens cannot write them, even if mortal words could portray it. Only those crowned in like manner can imagine the feelings filling Frank's bosom and illuming his face.

When a man fulfils his daily duties with an honest and true heart—when he is the soul of honour and incapable of wronging any one but himself—when he shows, and is not afraid to show, those gentle enthusiastic feelings belonging to a woman, and is, besides, manly, brave, and courteous—when he glories in his position as man, because it gives him the title and permission to be the protector and guardian of woman—then does he feel as our Frank felt, crowned with that especial happiness that belongs to the good.

Beside him sat one who, from education and habit, thought and acted very differently. He considered woman, according to that reason given at the birth of Eve, as created for the pleasure of man. In a word, he thought her of an inferior nature to himself. He owned the world would be wretched, desolate, a very Pandemonium without women, yet he would not elevate them to any standard. They were play-

things, tools, trifles, with whom to fool away hours of leisure and ease.

With these feelings in his heart, he had taken advantage of his position in the world to flirt with, to deceive, to bamboozle, to blight the existence of many of those inferior creatures called women. Had he been told that he was acting a dishonourable part to single out a young lady to make her conspicuous by his attentions, to let her name be coupled with his (we will say nothing of her affections being trifled with), he would have laughed. How could it be dishonourable to amuse oneself with a little flirting? But I am glad to record that, on this lovely night, nature all soft and beautiful, there fell a veil from the soul of this man. He felt the true nature of love—he realized its purity, divinity, its exalted aspirations. He understood what was meant by the word “helpmeet;” he acknowledged to himself that a woman can be

to a man what nothing else in all creation can be, part of himself—"bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh." In anticipating the honour and worship due to his intended wife, Sir George placed the whole female sex on a proper pedestal in his esteem.

But they have arrived at Puff—at Home.

No friendly and welcoming Scruttles comes to meet them with a lantern, and a joyful greeting. Silence and darkness reign supreme.

The Squire had brought a hamper with him, containing a dozen bottles of champagne.

Regarding this hamper as something precious, he ordered one of the boatmen to help Sam to carry it to the house, so that, if one stumbled, the other might be at hand to save the contents from an indiscreet fall.

Thus they proceeded cautiously. They approached; not a light in the house; dark, impenetrable silence! Sam, cognisant of a box of matches, procured a light. By the dim

obscurity of one candle they proceeded to look for the "excellent convict."

There were symptoms of his having laid the cloth for dinner; or was it only the remains of breakfast still on the table? It was.

And everything was covered with a coating of fine sand, which proved but too clearly, if any untoward fate had befallen the lonely Scruttles, it must have occurred very early in the day.

"Has he been murdered?" whispered Spooner sepulchrally.

"Good heavens! no," exclaimed the Squire, who was matter-of-fact to the last degree; "the spoons and forks seem all safe, and who would run the risk of being hanged for Scruttles?"

"Perhaps he has gone."

"Joy go with him!"

Meantime the search continued with unabated vigour; more candles were lit, until, in their

anxiety, some carried two, one in each hand. But each fresh light only showed their home in a state of most "admired disorder."

Everything downstairs seemed exactly in the same state in which they had left it. Upstairs they rushed. Not a bed made, not a basin emptied! Those who were untidy in their habits had the pain of exposure, for just where they had thrown their garments, there did they still lie.

The orderly ways of the Squire did him good service. There was the side of the room he occupied jointly with Spooner as tidy as possible, but his practised eye noted a change. How came half-a-dozen black bottles lying by his bedside—promiscuously thrown there? A snort from the bed made them rush towards it. There lay the lost Scruttles! Was he dead? Yes, after a fashion!

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed King Crab; "the loneliness has been too much for him."

“Carry the beast away!” roared the Squire; “why should he pitch upon my bed on which to sleep away his drunkenness? I should like to know why my bed was chosen?”

“You gave him five shillings, you know.”

“I will not sleep in it; I will pass the night in a chair. Why did the beast choose my bed?”

“It was the only one made, I fancy, Squire. Don’t you remember making it so tidily before you began to shave?”

“And for that animal! Take him away! Let him go back in the boat, and take all my bedding, and bring me fresh to-morrow from Deep-Cliffs. Burn that, whatever you do, or you will have jail fever!”

This was spoken to the boatmen, who, with Sam (nothing loth), were employed in rousing the “excellent convict.” But he was too hopelessly drunk to be roused, so they carried him like a log of wood down to the boat, into

which they flung him without much ceremony, pitching the bedding in after him.

Meantime, on a suggestion from Frank, who courteously asked leave of King Crab, a note was written to Muggs, to bid him send them a proper cook the next day. The Captain blandly consented, partly out of remembrance of the excellent dinner he had just eaten, and partly from a twinge of gratitude that no one taunted him with the dereliction of his "excellent convict."

They saw the boat off, not without a feeling of joy that they were rid of Scruttles, though no one openly said so. The most charitable amongst them hoped that, at all events, he would awake in the morning a wiser though a sadder man.

They then worked with a will to get things into decent order, during which business Sam exerted himself with so much alacrity and wit, that even King Crab had a good word for him.

It was almost twelve o'clock before they finished their household duties, winding up with improvising beds for the Squire and Spooner in the saloon; for various little incidents that must have occurred to Scruttles during the course of his Sunday debauch, had rendered their joint room vastly disagreeable.

There was such a meekness and amiability about King Crab, that they ventured to make one or two remarks on Scruttles, which he took in good part.

"My idea of that fellow is," said the Squire, "that from his very infancy he has been a beast. We may congratulate ourselves that nothing worse has happened. He might have levanted with everything, or set fire to the house. That he has got drunk on the only occasion left open to him, is less a matter of wonder than annoyance. Though as for annoyance, I can only say, we may all congratulate ourselves we are rid of him!"

"I think it was a very good idea sending for a proper cook," observed Spooner.

"Now that is a thing I cannot understand," said King Crab, just beginning to feel a little nettled; "why are eating and drinking the sole things a man cares for?"

"Not the sole things, but they are obviously the first cause of everything; we live to eat, and we cannot live without eating. Hunger makes a man work; hunger sharpens a man's wits; hunger is the top and the bottom, the beginning and end of everything we do."

"Bravo! Squire; I could not have explained the matter more psychologically than you have done!"

"Humph!" growled the Squire; "I am going to bed."

He had a mortal aversion to Spooner's learned disquisitions, as much because he understood nothing about them, as because he felt sure they smacked of guess rather than cer-

tainty; and, with all his love of truth, he was unable to contradict him.

Frank had gone, according to usual custom, to take a last look at what he called the heavens. Certainly Luff might have seemed a sort of heaven to him. To-night, for the first time, Sir George accompanied him.

The moon was just rising.

"All seems calm and safe," said Sir George.

"Yes, a more lovely night I never saw."

"I have thought a good deal to-day, Frank."

"I hope they have been thoughts to your liking?"

"Partly, I used to laugh at you, Frank, for your chivalrous notions about women. I wish—I wish I had been taught as you have been, to respect them."

"I was not taught. When a child, I loved and respected my mother; as I grew up, I respected all women for her sake."

"Was she so good a mother?"

"She was a true woman; gentle, tender, and unselfish. But even had she possessed none of these qualities, still, being my mother, I should have loved her; and being a woman, I respected her."

"Only because she was a woman?"

"Yes, George, and for this reason: man's life being imperfect—woman was made to complete it. She is therefore his peculiar charge. If he ill-treats her, neglects her, he is answerable for her sins. Let a man elevate a woman to the proper standard, namely, as the better part of himself, and she has the best and holiest reasons for acting up to that standard!"

"Then you think we men are, in a measure, answerable for the sins of women?"

"We won't say all. There are some which belong entirely to their own sex and habits. But there is a sensitiveness about women, and

an unselfishness, that makes them, in the first instance, peculiarly alive to appreciation; and in the second, singularly devoted and affectionate."

"Have you ever been in love, Frank? before——"

Sir George paused; he was going to say, "before you saw Miss Severn."

But he was not quite sure whether he might venture to touch upon a matter that seemed at present in a very delicate crisis.

"I fell in love," answered Frank at once, "with a girl (I ought to call her a woman) when I was only eighteen, and she was two or three and twenty, perhaps more. That was the first time. She was just that sort of person who might beguile a boy out of his heart—*petite*, delicate, fair, a lovely face, and graceful figure. Everybody admired her, and wondered why she did not marry. For my part, when I first began to descry the dawn-

ings of love, I concluded that fate had designed her for me, and so kept her free. She had a soft, beguiling voice, a gentle, beseeching manner. She was truly a woman—a thing in those days I admired. I liked them to be helpless. You must know that she was, is, first cousin to the Squire, but, as you are never likely to meet her anywhere, I don't mind telling you how she played with that toy, my heart. That is, if you like to hear it."

"By all means, Frank, nothing I should like better."

"The Squire, you must know, was rather unfortunate in his parents. His father was one of those rough, uncouth natures who have sterling qualities, though they are developed in a disagreeable manner. Imagine a person like our Squire, without his *bonhomie*, without being softened, as the Squire evidently has been softened, by living with such a woman as his wife.

“His mother was a showy, fine woman, who caught her husband’s fancy by her bold and resolute character, and lost it afterwards by practising those virtues in private life.

“As he said, ‘We don’t want two masters in my house. I am master, and, if you won’t take your proper position as mistress, and mistress only, I recommend you to seek another home. You shall not live here.’ Which advice she took, and made her residence in Bath, where she led a life into which we need not make further inquiries.

“Her husband was more than forty when he married her, and life, you know, in those days, was not so long as now. Port wine and bad habits began to tell on his constitution at forty, while an hereditary tendency to gout came on, and helped to put an end to him before our Squire was ten years old.

“His uncle was appointed his guardian,

whose only daughter was the young lady I am speaking of—my first love. Her name was Eliza, but she chose to be called by her friends Elise, though her father, with the stubborn characteristics of his family, always persisted in calling her by the first name.

“Her mother was an invalid, and had been so for many years, so Elise had been virtually mistress of her father’s house for many years. She and our Squire had known each other from the time his father died. She was a little the elder.

“Now, though she had made up her mind to marry the Squire very early in their young lives, she was incapable of resisting admiration. She was never satisfied unless she had some one dangling after her. But I will confine myself simply to my own case. She was one of those dangerous women, a true flirt. She made no difficulty of telling me in private that she loved me, and only me, while in

public she received the adulation and flattery of anyone who would give it her. I saw this, and yet was foolish enough to be wheedled out of my natural indignation whenever she chose. Perhaps she might have seriously endangered my peace of mind, or, at all events, soured me as to the merits of the feminine world, but for the announcement of the Squire's intended marriage. I do not know if he had ever professed love for her, or given her any reason to suppose he loved her, or, in fact, acted in such a way as to lead the world to think he had jilted her. I had never seen him, or, indeed, heard much of him; for, though she often talked of her cousin, it was in a careless, indifferent manner. Moreover, I knew he seldom wrote, though he was and had been abroad for two years; and when he did write, the letter was always short, always to ask for his remittances, and invariably addressed to his aunt.

“Thus I was taken greatly by surprise at the sudden effect of this news upon her. She was simply furious. To see this little delicate woman—always so beautifully dressed, so feminine in her ways, so dainty in her speech, giving way to a fit of passion, was, my dear George, the most painful scene I ever witnessed in all my life. She had a very peculiar way of doing her hair, like no one I ever saw—it was a fashion of her own, and suited her wonderfully. Well, don’t laugh at me, but in her rage she disarranged her hair. You would have been as startled as I was in the change it made in her. She was absolutely ugly. Her low, receding brow was exposed; large, thin, hideously-shaped ears were brought forward; and, so far from looking like a woman, she reminded me of nothing but a vindictive weasel, intent upon hunting its prey to death.

“‘Frank,’ she exclaimed, as soon as she

could speak coherently, 'we must prevent this marriage; it must not take place; I will have him up for breach of promise; I will expose him; I will poison her! kill her!'

"Really to think of the Squire having inspired such a frantic attachment!"

"I do not wish to deteriorate from the Squire's merits, for they must have been great to gain him the affections of Mrs. Joscelyn; but his cousin Elise was not put into this rage by disappointed love, but because she was disappointed in gaining an end. She had settled that she would marry her cousin, and whether an eligible plan or not, her temper would not brook being thwarted. No, I consider Elise to have been incapable of any love, but the love of her own way."

"Do you suppose the Squire had really given her any cause to think he loved her?"

"Jealous, as I was of him, at the time,

my reason asserted that he could have given her very little. After I knew him, I was confident that, if anything, he disliked her. Certainly they were as opposite in character as fire and water. He was all frankness; he could no more hide a sensation, than he could tell an untruth. She was, from the crown of her head to the sole of her feet, wholly made up of deceit. It was the happiness of her life to have a mystery. Before she exposed her real character to me in this fit of passion, I had been pained by this flaw in her character. My love, which was open and honourable, she persisted in investing with all the odiums and inconveniences of a secret attachment. She was for ever placing me in positions abhorrent to my nature, and using the plausible excuse that it was for my sake.

“Her father and mother would be angry at my presumption, so mere a boy. More than once I had said, I would incur their displea-

sure rather than hate myself for deceiving them. Then would she answer, ‘that I thought only of myself, and not her, and that it would kill her if deprived of my society.’”

“She seems to have bomboozled you well, Frank; I wonder you had patience with any of the sex afterwards.”

“I was not going to lose my faith in them, because it was my chance to meet with one like Elise. I owed it to my mother to pit her virtues against this woman’s small, degrading sins. Besides, I was soon cured of my love for her when I saw her in juxtaposition with Mrs. Joscelyn.”

“Did the Squire bring home his bride, then?”

“He brought her, or rather she came, to pay his relations a visit before they married. It was only by a miracle, and a good fate, that they ever got married at all. I fancy Mrs. Joscelyn could tell an extraordinary tale, if

she chose. The battle of truth and honour against hypocrisy and craft was, if I mistake not, a very sharp one. I was obliged to leave in the very middle of it, so I don't know how they conquered."

"Perhaps the Squire would tell us?"

"I very much question if he knows anything about it, and he could not understand the crooked ways of Elise if he tried to do so. He had a perception that she was artful, and not to his mind, but that made no difference to him. As for Mrs. Joscelyn, I think she understood her at once, or, at all events, very soon.

"I was in the house when she arrived; a blooming, beautiful, blushing girl, all frankness and innocence. She felt her position, alone, without any of her relations, come to be inspected as it were, and that not by a future father and mother, but by those uncomfortable, criticising sorts of people, uncles and aunts. She had

not the satisfaction of trying to win their affections, for they were cold-hearted, frigid people, and asked her to visit them more out of compliment to the Squire than anything else. This she appears to have understood at once, and accepted the terms on which she was to be held.

“But there was something so artless, at the same time sensible in her manner, a tact so singular, yet perfectly natural, that she made a conquest of the uncle and aunt in a very short time. They could not help loving her. What delighted the old gentleman the most, was her pretty frank way with her intended husband.

“Without the least affectation of nonsense, or a parade of sentimentalism or prudery, she showed her affection for him, and her thorough appreciation of what it was to have a lover. This charmed him. One instance in particular I remember. There was to be a dinner-party,

and, according to the scheming of Elise, the lovers were not to go into dinner together. In vain the old gentleman tried to overrule Elise.

“‘Never mind,’ said the young bride, smiling, ‘we can exchange looks!’

“I should like to have seen the Squire in love.”

“He was by no means a fond lover; indeed, he acted that phase in his life pretty much in the same way as he acts the part of husband. He is very uncomfortable without his Elizabeth. Once she was very ill indeed; I think it was after little Bessie’s birth. He had been always hankering for a daughter, and I remember meeting him wild with delight that this little longed-for stranger had arrived. I never saw him more jubilant and gay. Do you know, my dear George, three days after that, I saw him, and did not know him. He seemed absolutely shrivelled up with grief. He could not rest, he could not sleep; he had

eaten nothing the two days she was in imminent danger; only he drank—drank great tumblers of wine, which had no more effect on him than water. They sent for me to be with him; indeed, if the worst had happened, which at that time was most imminent, there was every fear that his reason might give way, and, unable to support life without her, he might, overcome by the shock, make away with himself. We had stringent orders to remove everything like a weapon, or that might be used as an instrument of destruction, from his sight.”

“Poor dear Squire! He is the last man I ever should have picked out as likely to die for love of a woman!”

“She was his wife, remember; perhaps he would have borne it better had they not been married.”

“I argue just the contrary, Frank; I know many men who——”

“I am not going to listen to anything unorthodox. Let me finish my tale; I seem to have lost sight of my own sufferings, talking of the Squire’s.”

“Keep them back for a moment, while you tell me how long the Squire was in this sad condition.”

“For nearly a week. He was at last so reduced, and so nervous, that he was unable to leave his room, and twenty times in an hour he would send me to her door to make inquiries. She had brain fever, or something of that sort, brought on by the culpable negligence of the nurse, who accidentally set fire to the bed-curtains the day after her confinement; and though she and her baby were rescued in time, she was carried in a hurry to a bed on which they had put unaired sheets. But, at all events, I knew she had brain fever, for I used to hear her voice, not exactly raving, but quietly crooning, as it

were, snatches of old songs; and at times she would repeat psalms and prayers. In fact, her mind was in that happy state that, dangerously ill as she was, there was no difficulty in nursing her. The sweetness and loveliness of her disposition was as strongly developed when bereft of reason, as at her sanest moments.

“It was to this calmness, this gentleness, that she owed her life. She never disputed a single thing the doctor commanded, when he asked her to do it ‘to please him.’

“‘Of course,’ she would say, ‘anything to please you.’

“Once I persuaded her husband to go to her door, thinking it would comfort him to hear her voice so happily talking. It so happened that she mentioned his name.

“‘John! John!’ she exclaimed, as if calling him, ‘why don’t you answer your Lizzy?’

“He rushed into the room, thinking she was

really sane and called him, and when he found that, though he held her in his arms, and laid his tear-stained face against her flushed one, that she still kept calling,

“ ‘John! John! why don’t you answer your Lizzy?’ ”

“It was too much for him. He sobbed aloud.

“She did not know him in the least.

“I did not tell him when the crisis was at hand. I thought the shock either way was better for him to bear than the suspense.

“At last I heard that she slept—the one thing for which we were all praying.

“I went downstairs and ordered a light dinner to be prepared and sent up to a small boudoir that was placed half-way up the stairs. When it was ready I took him there, but he turned away as usual, loathing the food.

“ ‘God has been very good,’ I said, ‘your wife sleeps. When she awakes it will be for

life or death. Eat, therefore, that you may have strength to see her either way.'

"He was like a meek, little child, and I could see that, as he ate, a ravenous hunger came upon him, which I thought it well to indulge. The effect of so much food, after such unusual fasting, was, as I hoped, to make him drowsy. He fell fast asleep, with a mouthful almost unswallowed, and his slumber was almost as beneficial to him as to his wife. It was so heavy that he did not snore as usual, which was the reason I had him moved to this lower room, for fear he should do so and disturb his wife. Though I don't think it would have done so, her nature is such that, well or ill, nothing annoys her but wickedness. When the Squire awoke, I had the happiness of telling him his wife was out of danger. He squeezed my hand until I could have roared. And the dear fellow went into his bedroom and, I am certain, fell

on his knees, and thanked God heartily."

"Well, he never gave me the least idea of that sort of man; and he is often so brusque with his wife."

"He is so; but that is the peculiarity of his character. He always acts and speaks just as he thinks. Nine times out of ten his impulses are good. Can we all say the same?"

"I fear not. I for one should be sorry to speak all the thoughts of my mind. They would disgrace me, I know. The Squire is the last man I ever thought to elevate into a hero, especially a tender one. So go on, Frank, with the laceration of your heart. I expect to be wonderfully touched."

"Then your expectations will not be verified. I dare say, if Elise had died, I should have mourned her as deeply as the most tender lover. But, my dear George, love vanishes like smoke when there is no esteem.

A feeling of honour retained me by her side for a time, just to assist her, if I discovered that Mr. Joscelyn had really given her cause for her accusations. But, you must allow, I should have been more than a fool not to see that I had been befooled. It was rather a relief to find she was incapable of love—that is, love such as I wanted. She was very artful, and nearly drew me into a partnership with her to separate the young lovers, and make them quarrel. But the indomitable frankness of the Squire, and the faith and innocence of his *fiancée*, seemed so likely to be a match for all her arts, that I left them all, as the safest course to pursue.”

“And what became of her?”

“I never wilfully vilify a woman. Get her fate out of the Squire, if you are curious.”

“And did you never love again between then and now?”

“I went out to the Mauritius for four years,

to look after some property of my father's. When I came home, he was dead, and my mother fell into the illness that lasted until her death, two years ago."

"Well, Frank, I won't pry further into your secrets. It is astonishing how much better human nature is than we are taught to think it. If Spooner was here, he would give us learned reasons for this, no doubt."

"Poor Spooner! much learning will not make him mad. He picks up a hard word or two, and applies them according to sound rather than sense. But 'tis an innocent amusement."

"Now, his wife is a woman I should hate to live with."

"I fancy if I was obliged to marry her, I would beg to part at the church door."

"Do I hear aright? The most *preux chevalier* the ladies possess, absolutely professing to dislike one?"

“How can I appreciate the others, George, if I do not estimate all at their worth?”

“Frank, what do you think of—I mean, do you not see—has it ever struck you, there is a resemblance between the aunt and the niece?”

“I did not know Mrs. Spooner possessed an aunt; she is old enough to be her own aunt.”

“Mrs. Joscelyn, my dear fellow—I mean Mrs. Joscelyn and her niece.”

“Of course there is a great likeness in their characters, and will be more so as Miss Daintree grows older.”

“I wonder you did not fall in love with her, Frank.”

“She is too young for me; I have known her from a child.”

“Do you think she would make a good wife?”

“It is quite impossible for her to be

otherwise. She carries her warranty in her face."

"I think, Frank—I have been thinking a good deal to-day. I really think I must marry soon."

"I would not think about it, George, any more—I would do it."

"By Jove! I will. Thank you, Frank; I am very much obliged to you, Frank."

"My advice is more palatable than King Crab's."

"Ugh! I hate him! How could we be such fools as to be led by him, to come to this odious spot!"

"Treason! treason! I will write every word you say in the journal."

"Do so; for, if you don't, I shall do it myself."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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